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MAHATMA GANDHI

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GANDHI CENTENARY CELEBRATION
(October 2, 1968 to October 2, 1969)

একলা চলো রে

MAHATMA
GANDHI

HIS LIFE IN PICTURES

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This revised edition of the Mahatma Gandhi album is offered on the occasion of the Gandhi Centenary celebration. The selection of hundred and forty photographs out of many thousands covering Gandhiji's life and work was not an easy task. The album, therefore, does not claim to be exhaustive or fully comprehensive. An effort has been made, however, to make it as representative as possible. The arrangement of photographs is thematic more than sequential ; but a majority of pictures appear in their chronological order, and dates are given wherever necessary. Many old and rare photographs are here ; these may not be technically perfect, but the album would have been incomplete without them. The sources from which these photographs have been got on loan or acquired are numerous. Grateful acknowledgement is made to the following individuals and organizations and also to those whose names do not appear here for want of adequate information : The Sarvodaya Diwas Samiti ; the Sumati Morarjee Collection ; the Photo Division ; the Press Information Bureau ; The *Hindustan Times ; The Statesman ; The Hindu ; The Times of India ; The Hindustan Standard ;* Associated Photo Service ; Bhagat Bhai & Co. ; S. Bhatia & Brothers ; Counsic Brothers ; Felicita Studios ; Gopal Chitra Kuteer ; Gujarat News Photos ; Indian News Photos ; Krishna Studio ; Mahale Brothers ; Simla Studios ; Ambujammal ; B. J. Bhatt ; Braja Kishore Sinha ; Henri Cartier-Bresson ; S. S. Iyer ; Jagan V. Mehta ; Jamshed Nusserwanji ; Jan Baros ; Kakasaheb Kalelkar ; Kamal Kumar ; Kamalnayan Bajaj ; Kanu Gandhi ; Kalyanji Bhai ; Katrak ; T. Kasi Nath ; Kulwant Rai ; Kundan Lal ; Lalit Gopal ; D. B. Mahulikarla ; Maniam Netesan ; Motiram Jain ; N. J. Nalawala ; N. Raval ; Naginbhai Shah; P. N. K. Murthy ; R. V. Pandit ; Rajgopal ; T. S. Satyan ; P. N. Sharma ; U. N. Singh ; B. N. Sinha ; Sushila Nayyar ; Tarak Das ; Vaju C. Sheth ; and D. R. D. Wadia.

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Introduction

WHEN GANDHI was born British rule had been securely established in India. The uprising of 1857, known as the Mutiny, had merely served to consolidate the British adventure into an empire. India had effectively passed under British tutelage, so effectively indeed, that instead of resenting alien rule the new generation of educated Indians were eager to submit to the "civilizing mission" of their foreign masters. Political subjection had been reinforced by intellectual and moral servility. It seemed that the British empire in India was safe for centuries.

When Gandhi died it was as a free nation that India mourned the loss. The disinherited had recovered their heritage and the "dumb millions" had found their voice. The disarmed had won a great battle and had in the process evolved a moral force such as to compel the attention, and to some degree the admiration, of the world. The story of this miracle is also the story of Gandhi's life, for he more than any other was the architect of this miracle. It is not for nothing that his grateful countrymen called him and have continued to call him the Father of the Nation.

And yet it would be an exaggeration to say that Gandhi alone wrought this miracle. No single individual, however great and wonderful, can be the sole engineer of a historical process. A succession of remarkable predecessors and elder contemporaries had quarried and broken the stones which helped Gandhi to pave the way to India's independence. They had set in motion various trends in the intellectual, social and moral consciousness of the people which the genius of Gandhi mobilized and directed in a grand march. Raja Rammohun Roy, Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and his great disciple, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Dadabhai Naoroji, Badruddin Tyabji, Syed Ahmed Khan, Ranade, Gokhale, Tilak, Aurobindo Ghosh and Rabindranath Tagore, to name only a few, each one of them had in his own field created a consciousness of India's destiny and helped to generate a spirit of sacrifice which, in Gandhi's hands, became the instruments of a vast political-cum-moral upheaval. Had Gandhi been born hundred years earlier he could hardly have achieved what he did. Nevertheless, it is true that but for Gandhi India's political destiny would have been vastly different and her moral stature vastly inferior.

But though Gandhi lived, suffered and died in India for Indians, it is not in relation to India's destiny alone that his life has significance. Nor is it only as a patriot, politician and nation-builder that he will be remembered by future generations. He was essentially a moral force whose appeal is to the conscience of man and therefore universal. He was the servant and friend of man as man and not as belonging to this or that nation, religion or race. If he worked for Indians only, it was because he was born among them and because their humiliation and suffering supplied the necessary incentives to his moral sensibility. The lesson of his life therefore is for all to read. He founded no church and though he lived by faith he left behind no dogma for the faithful to quarrel over. He gave no attributes to God save Truth and prescribed no path for attaining it save honest and relentless search through means that injure no living thing. Who dare therefore claim Gandhi for his own except by claiming him for all?

Another lesson of his life which should be of universal interest is that he was not born a genius and did not exhibit in early life any extraordinary faculty that is not shared by the common run of men. He was no inspired bard like Rabindranath Tagore, he had no mystic visions like Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, he was no child prodigy like Shankara or Vivekananda. He was just an ordinary child like most of us. If there was anything extraordinary about him as a child it was his shyness, a handicap from which he suffered for a long time. No doubt, something very extraordinary must have been latent in his spirit which later developed into an iron will and combined with a moral

sensibility made him what he became, but there was little evidence of it in his childhood. We may therefore derive courage and inspiration from the knowledge that if he made himself what he was, there is no visible reason why others should not be able to do the same.

His genius, if that word must be used, was, so to say, an infinite capacity for taking pains in fulfilment of a restless moral urge. His life was one continuous striving, an unremitting *sadhana*, a relentless search for truth, not abstract or metaphysical truth, but such truth as can be realized in human relations. He climbed step by step, each step no bigger than a man's, till when we saw him at the height he seemed more than a man. "Generations to come, it may be, will scarce believe", wrote Einstein, "that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth." If at the end he seemed like no other man, it is good to remember that when he began he was like any other man.

Such is the great lesson of his life. Fortunately, he has himself recorded for us the main incidents of his life till 1921 and described with scrupulous veracity the evolution of his moral and intellectual consciousness. Had he not done so, there would have been in India no dearth of devout chroniclers who would have invented divine portents at his birth and invested him with a halo from his childhood.

Birth and Upbringing

MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI was born on October 2, 1869, at Porbandar, a small town on the western coast of India, which was then one of the many tiny states in Kathiawar. He was born in a middle class family of Vaishya caste. His grandfather had risen to be the Dewan or Prime Minister of Porbandar and was succeeded by his son Karamchand who was the father of Mohandas. Putlibai, Mohandas's mother, was a saintly character, gentle and devout, and left a deep impress on her son's mind.

Mohandas went to an elementary school in Porbandar, where he found it difficult to master the multiplication tables. "My intellect must have been sluggish and my memory raw", he recalled with candour many years later. He was seven when his family moved to Rajkot, another state in Kathiawar, where his father became Dewan. There he attended a primary school and later joined a high school. Though conscientious he was a "mediocre student" and was excessively shy and timid.

While his school record gave no indication of his future greatness, there was one incident which was significant. A British school inspector came to examine the boys and set a spelling test. Mohandas made a mistake which the class teacher noticed. The latter motioned to him to copy the correct spelling from his neighbour's slate. Mohandas refused to take the hint and was later chided for his "stupidity".

We can also discover in the little boy a hint of that passion for reforming others which later became so dominant a trait of the Mahatma, though in this case the zeal almost led him astray. Impelled by a desire to reform a friend of his elder brother's, one Sheikh Mehtab, he cultivated his company and imbibed habits which he had to regret later. This friend convinced him that the British could rule India because they lived on meat which gave them the necessary strength. So Mohandas who came of an orthodox vegetarian family took to tasting meat clandestinely, for patriotic reasons. But apart from the inherited vegetarian sentiment which made him feel, after he had once swallowed a piece, as if "a live goat were bleating inside me", he had to wrestle with the knowledge that such clandestine repasts would have to be hidden from his parents which would entail falsehood on his part. This he was reluctant to do. And so after a few such experiments he gave up the idea, consoling himself with the reflection : "When they are no more and I have found my freedom, I will eat meat openly."

While he was still in high school, he was married, at the age of thirteen, to Kasturbai who was also of the same age. For a boy of that age marriage meant only a round of feasts, new clothes to wear and a strange and docile companion to play with. But he soon felt the impact of sex which he has described for us with admirable candour. The infinite tenderness and respect which were so marked and touching a characteristic of his attitude in later life to Indian women may have owed something to his personal experience of "the cruel custom of child marriage", as he called it.

Youth and Study in England

AFTER MATRICULATING from the high school, Mohandas joined the Samaldas College in Bhavnagar, where he found the studies difficult and the atmosphere uncongenial. Meanwhile, his father had died in 1885. A friend of the family suggested that if the young Gandhi hoped to take his father's place in the state service he had better become a barrister which he could do in England in three years. Gandhi jumped at the idea. The mother's objection to his going abroad was overcome by the son's solemn vow not to touch wine, women and meat.

Gandhi went to Bombay to take the boat for England. In Bombay, his caste people, who looked upon crossing the ocean as contamination, threatened to excommunicate him if he persisted in going abroad. But Gandhi was adamant and was thus formally excommunicated by his caste. Undeterred, he sailed on September 4, 1888, for Southampton—aged eighteen. A few months earlier Kasturbai had borne him a son.

The first few days in London were miserable. "I would continually think of my home and country...Everything was strange—the people, their ways and even their dwellings. I was a complete novice in the matter of English etiquette, and continually had to be on my guard. There was the additional inconvenience of the vegetarian vow. Even the dishes that I could eat were tasteless and insipid."

The food difficulty was solved when one day he chanced upon a vegetarian restaurant in Farringdon Street where he also bought a copy of Salt's *Plea for Vegetarianism* and was greatly impressed by it. Hitherto he had been a vegetarian because of the vow he had taken. From now on he became a vegetarian by choice. He read many more books on vegetarianism and diet and was delighted to discover modern science confirm the practice of his forefathers. To spread vegetarianism became henceforward his mission, as he put it.

During the early period of his stay in England Gandhi went through a phase which he has described as aping the English gentleman. He got new clothes made, purchased a silk hat costing nineteen shillings, "wasted ten pounds on an evening dress suit made in Bond Street" and flaunted a double watch-chain of gold. He took lessons in French and in elocution and spent three guineas to learn ball-room dancing. But he soon realized—and here is foreshadowed the real Gandhi—that if he could not become a gentleman by virtue of his character, the ambition was not worth cherishing.

Towards the end of his second year in London, he came across two theosophist brothers who introduced him to Sir Edwin Arnold's translation in English verse of the Gita—*The Song Celestial*. He was deeply impressed. "The book struck me as one of priceless worth. This opinion of the Gita has ever since been growing on me, with the result that I regard it today as the supreme book for the knowledge of Truth. It has afforded me invaluable help in my moments of gloom."

About the same time a Christian friend whom he had met in a vegetarian boarding house introduced him to the Bible. He found it difficult to wade through the Old Testament which put him to sleep, but he fell in love with the New Testament and specially with the Sermon on the Mount. He also read Sir Edwin Arnold's rendering

of Buddha's life—*The Light of Asia*—as well as the chapter on the Prophet of Islam in Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero Worship*. The attitude of respect for all religions and the desire to understand the best in each one of them were thus planted in his mind early in life.

Having passed his examinations Gandhi was called to the Bar on June 10, 1891, and sailed for India two days later.

On the Threshold of Manhood

WHEN HE REACHED Bombay he learnt to his profound sorrow that his mother had died. The news had been deliberately kept back from him to spare him the shock in a distant land.

After spending some time in Rajkot where with his usual earnestness he immediately took in hand the education of his little son and of his brother's children, he decided to set up in legal practice in Bombay. He stayed in Bombay for a few months but had only one small brief. When he rose to argue it in the court, his nerve failed him and he could not utter a word.

Having failed to establish himself in Bombay, Gandhi returned to Rajkot where he started again. But he did not make much headway and was unhappy and out of tune with the atmosphere of petty intrigue that was rampant in the small states of Kathiawar. In this predicament came an offer from Dada Abdulla & Co. to proceed to South Africa on their behalf to instruct their counsel in a lawsuit. It was a godsend. Gandhi jumped at it and sailed for South Africa in April 1893.

He little realized what he was letting himself in for and fondly imagined that he was escaping from an unpleasant situation in Rajkot and was going to make a little money after all. But fate had something different in store for him. It was in South Africa that this shy, timid youth of twenty-four, inexperienced, unaided, alone, came into clash with forces that obliged him to tap his hidden moral resources and turn misfortunes into creative spiritual experiences.

Dressed in a frock-coat and turban Gandhi landed in Durban where his client Abdulla Sheth received him. Almost the first thing he sensed on arrival was the oppressive atmosphere of racial snobbishness. Indians of whom large numbers were settled in South Africa, some as merchants, some in the professions, the large majority as indentured labourers or their descendants, were all looked down upon as pariahs by the white settlers and called coolies or samis. Thus a Hindu doctor was a coolie doctor and Gandhi himself a coolie barrister.

After about a week's stay in Durban Gandhi left for Pretoria, the capital of the Transvaal, where his presence was needed in connection with a lawsuit. A first class ticket was purchased for him by his client. When the train reached Maritzburg, the capital of Natal, at about 9 p.m. a white passenger who boarded the train objected to the presence of a "coloured" man in the compartment and Gandhi was ordered by a railway official to shift to a third class. When he refused to do so, a constable pushed him out and his luggage was taken away by the railway authorities. It was winter and bitterly cold. Gandhi sat and shivered the whole night in the waiting-room, thinking : 'Should I fight for my rights or go back to India?' He decided that it was cowardice to run away without fulfilling his obligations.

The next evening he continued the train journey—this time without a mishap. But a bigger mishap awaited him on the journey from Charlestown to Johannesburg which had to be covered by stagecoach. He was made to sit with the coachman on the box outside, while the white conductor sat inside with the white passengers.

Gandhi pocketed the insult for fear of missing the coach altogether. On the way the conductor who wanted a smoke spread a piece of dirty sack-cloth on the footboard and ordered Gandhi to sit there so that the conductor could have Gandhi's seat and smoke. Gandhi refused. The conductor swore and rained blows on him, trying to throw him down. Gandhi clung to the brass rails of the coach box, refusing to yield and unwilling to retaliate. Some of the white passengers protested at this cowardly assault and the conductor was obliged to stop beating Gandhi who kept his seat.

Though his main concern in Pretoria was with the lawsuit, Gandhi's sense of social justice had been aroused by his personal experience of the indignities to which his countrymen were subject. He therefore lost no time, after making the necessary preliminary contacts, in calling a meeting of the Indian community in Pretoria which consisted largely of Muslim merchants. This was his first public speech successfully delivered. He exhorted his countrymen to observe truthfulness even in business and reminded them that their responsibility was all the greater since their country would be judged by their conduct in a foreign land. He asked them to forget all distinctions of religion and caste and to give up some of their insanitary habits. He suggested the formation of an association to look after the welfare of the Indian settlers and offered his free time and services.

The position of Indians in the Transvaal was worse than in Natal. They were compelled to pay a poll tax of £3; they were not allowed to own land except in a specially allotted location, a kind of ghetto; they had no franchise, and were not allowed to walk on the pavement or move out of doors after 9 p.m. without a special permit. One day Gandhi, who had received from the State Attorney a letter authorizing him to be out of doors all hours, was having his usual walk. As he passed near President Kruger's house, the policeman on duty, suddenly and without any warning, pushed him off the pavement and kicked him into the street. Mr. Coates, an English Quaker who knew Gandhi, happened to pass by and saw the incident. He advised Gandhi to proceed against the man and offered himself as witness. But Gandhi declined the offer saying that he had made it a rule not to go to court in respect of a personal grievance.

In the meanwhile he had been working hard at the lawsuit and had gained a sound knowledge of legal practice. He made two discoveries : one was that facts are three-fourths of the law; the other, that litigation was ruinous to both parties in a suit and therefore the duty of a lawyer was to bring them together in a settlement out of court. In this particular case he succeeded in persuading both Abdulla Sheth and the opposing party, Tyeb Sheth, to accept arbitration.

Having completed his work in Pretoria, Gandhi returned to Durban and prepared to sail home. But at a farewell dinner given in his honour some one showed him a news item in *Natal Mercury* that the Natal Government proposed to introduce a bill to disfranchise Indians. Gandhi immediately understood the ominous implications of this bill which, as he said, "is the first nail into our coffin" and advised his compatriots to resist it by concerted action. But they pleaded their helplessness without him and begged him to stay on for another month. He agreed, little realizing that this one month would grow into twenty years.

With his usual earnestness Gandhi then and there turned the farewell dinner into an action committee and drafted a petition to the Natal Legislative Assembly. Volunteers came forward to make copies of the petition and to collect signatures—all during the night. The petition received good publicity in the press the following morning. The bill was however passed. Undeterred, Gandhi set to work on another petition to Lord Ripon, the Secretary of State for Colonies. Within a month the mammoth petition with ten thousand signatures was sent to Lord Ripon and a thousand copies printed for distribution. Even *The Times* admitted the justice of the Indian claim, and for the

first time the people in India came to know of the hard lot of their compatriots in South Africa.

Gandhi insisted that if he had to extend his stay in South Africa he would accept no remuneration for his public services and since he still thought it necessary to live as befitted a barrister he needed about £300 to meet his expenses. He therefore enrolled as an advocate of the Supreme Court of Natal.

Emergence of the Mahatma

THREE YEARS' STAY in South Africa persuaded Gandhi that he could not now desert a cause he had so warmly espoused. He therefore took six months' leave to visit India and bring his family back. But it was no holiday. He visited many cities in India and worked hard to interest the editors of papers and eminent public men in the unfortunate condition of Indians in South Africa. He published a small pamphlet on the subject. Though it was a very sober and restrained statement of the Indian case, a distorted summary cabled by Reuters created considerable misunderstanding in Natal which was to have unpleasant consequences later.

When plague broke out in Rajkot, Gandhi volunteered his services and visited every locality, including the quarters of the untouchables, to inspect the latrines and teach the residents better methods of sanitation.

During this visit, he made the acquaintance of veteran leaders like Badruddin Tyabji, Pherozeshah Mehta, Surendranath Banerjee and the great savant and patriot, Tilak. He met the wise and noble-hearted Gokhale and was greatly attracted to him. He addressed a large public meeting in Bombay. He was due to speak in Calcutta also, but before he could do so an urgent telegram from the Indian community in Natal obliged him to cut short his stay and sail for Durban with his wife and children in November 1896.

When the ship reached Durban, it was put into five days' quarantine. The European community, misled by garbled versions of Gandhi's activities in India and by a rumour that he was bringing shiploads of Indians to settle in Natal, were wild with anger and threatened to drown all the passengers. However, the passengers, including Gandhi's family, were allowed to land unmolested. But when Gandhi came down a little later and his identity was discovered, an infuriated mob fell upon him, stoning, beating and kicking him and would probably have killed him had not a brave English lady come to his rescue.

News of this cowardly assault received wide publicity and Joseph Chamberlain, the British Secretary of State for the Colonies, cabled an order to Natal to prosecute all those who were responsible for the attempted lynching. But Gandhi refused to identify and prosecute his assailants, saying that they were misled and that he was sure that when they came to know the truth they would be sorry for what they had done. Thus spoke the Mahatma in him.

It was during this second period in South Africa that Gandhi's mode of living underwent a change, albeit gradual. Formerly, he was anxious to maintain the standard of an English barrister. Now he began, in his usual methodical but original fashion, to reduce his wants and his expenses. He "studied the art" of laundering and became his own washerman. He could now iron and starch a stiff white collar. He also learnt to cut his own hair. He not only cleaned his own chamber-pots but often of his guests as well. Not satisfied with self-help, he volunteered, despite his busy practice as a lawyer and the demands of public work, his free service for two hours a day as a compounder in a charitable hospital. He also undertook the education at home of

his two sons and a nephew. He read books on nursing and midwifery and in fact served as midwife when his fourth and last son was born.

In 1899 the Boer War broke out. Though Gandhi's sympathies were all with the Boers who were fighting for their independence, he advised the Indian community to support the British cause, on the ground that since they claimed their rights as British subjects it was their duty to defend the Empire when it was threatened. He therefore organized and, with the help of Dr. Booth, trained an Indian Ambulance Corps of 1,100 volunteers and offered its services to the Government. The corps under Gandhi's leadership rendered valuable service and was mentioned in dispatches. What pleased Gandhi most was the fact that Indians of all creeds and castes lived and faced danger together. All his life nothing gave him greater happiness than the sight of men working as brothers and rising above the prejudices of creed, caste or race.

In 1901, at the end of the war, Gandhi felt that he must now return to India. His professional success in South Africa might, he feared, turn him into a "money-maker". With great difficulty he persuaded his friends to let him go and promised to return should the community need him within a year.

He reached India in time to attend the Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress and had the satisfaction of seeing his resolution on South Africa pass with acclamation. He was however disappointed with the Congress. He felt that the Indian politicians talked too much and did too little. He deplored the importance given to the English language in their discussions and was pained to see the insanitary condition of the latrines in the camp.

After staying for a few days in Calcutta as Gokhale's guest, he went on a tour of India, travelling third class in order to study for himself the habits and difficulties of the poor. He observed that the extreme discomfort of third class travel in India was due as much to the indifference of the railway authorities as to the dirty habits of the passengers themselves and suggested that educated persons should voluntarily travel third so as to reform the people's habits and be in a position to ventilate their legitimate grievances. The diagnosis as well as the remedy suggested were characteristic of his approach to all social and political problems—equal emphasis on obligations as on rights.

Gandhi was not destined to work in India yet. Hardly had he set up in practice in Bombay when a cablegram from the Indian community in Natal recalled him. He had given them his word that he would return if needed. Leaving his family in India he sailed again.

He had been called to put the Indian case before Joseph Chamberlain who was visiting South Africa. But the Colonial Secretary who had come to receive a gift of thirty-five million pounds from South Africa had no mind to alienate the European community. Gandhi failed in his mission to win Chamberlain's sympathy and discovered in the process that the situation in the Transvaal had become ominous for the Indians. He therefore decided to stay on in Johannesburg and enrolled as an advocate of the Supreme Court.

Though he stayed on specifically to challenge European arrogance and to resist injustice, he harboured no hatred in his heart and was in fact always ready to help his opponents when they were in distress. It was this rare combination of readiness to resist wrong and capacity to love his opponent which baffled his enemies and compelled their admiration. When the so-called Zulu rebellion broke out, he again offered his help to the Government and raised an Indian Ambulance Corps. He was happy that he and his men had to nurse the sick and dying Zulus whom the white doctors and nurses were unwilling to touch.

It was during these marches through the Zulu country that he pondered deeply over the kind of life he should lead in order to dedicate himself completely to the service of humanity. He realized that absolute continence or *brahmacharya* was indispensable for the purpose, for one "could not live both after the flesh and the spirit". And so immediately after his return from the Zulu campaign in 1906, he announced his resolution to take a vow of absolute continence to a select group of friends.

This step was taken under the influence of the Bhagavad Gita which he had been reading regularly every morning for some time and committing to memory. Another doctrine of the Gita which influenced him profoundly was "non-possession". As soon as he realized its implications he allowed his insurance policy of Rs. 10,000 to lapse. Henceforth he would put his faith in God alone.

Next to the Gita, the book which influenced him most deeply was Ruskin's *Unto This Last* which his friend Polak had given him to read one day in 1904. What Ruskin preached, or rather what Gandhi understood him to preach, was the moral dignity of manual labour and the beauty of community living on the basis of equality. Since, unlike Ruskin, Gandhi could not appreciate an ideal without wanting to practise it, he immediately set about to buy a farm where such a life could be lived. Thus was founded the famous Phoenix colony, on a hundred acres of land, some fourteen miles from Durban.

But Gandhi could not stay long at Phoenix. Duty called him to Johannesburg where also, later, he founded another colony on similar ideals, at a distance of twenty-one miles from the city. He called it the Tolstoy Farm. In both these *ashrams*, as settlements organized on spiritual ideals are known in India, the inmates did all the work themselves, from cooking to scavenging. Extreme simplicity of life was observed, reinforced by a strict code of moral and physical hygiene. No medicines were kept, for Gandhi who had earlier read Adolf Just's *Return to Nature* believed profoundly in nature cure. Every inmate had to practise some handicraft. Gandhi himself learnt to make sandals.

He foresaw that a showdown with the South African Government was sooner or later inevitable and knew from his own individual experience that no brute force could quell the spirit of man ready to defy and willing to suffer. What he could do himself he could train others to do. Individual resistance could be expanded and organized into a mass struggle in the prosecution of a moral equivalent of war. He had read Tolstoy and Thoreau and was happy to find partial confirmation of his idea in their writings. Thoreau's use of the term "civil disobedience" did not seem to express Gandhi's own concept of *ahimsa* as a positive force of love, nor did he like the use of the phrase "passive resistance". The concept was now clearly formulated in his mind but the word to describe it was wanting. His cousin Maganlal Gandhi suggested *sadagraha*, meaning holding fast to truth or firmness in a righteous cause. Gandhi liked the term and changed it to *satyagraha*. Thus was evolved and formulated Gandhi's most original idea in political action.

The occasion was not long in coming. In 1907, when the Transvaal received responsible government, it passed what came to be known as the Black Act, requiring all Indians, men and women, to register and submit to finger prints. Gandhi advised the Indian community to refuse to submit to this indignity and to court imprisonment by defying the law. In January 1908, he was arrested and sentenced to two months' simple imprisonment. He was followed by other *satyagrahis*.

Before the prison term was over General Smuts sent him an emissary proposing that if the Indians *voluntarily* registered themselves he promised to repeal the Act. Gandhi agreed to the compromise. He always believed in trusting the opponent.

But the other Indians were not so trusting. One burly Pathan even charged Gandhi with having betrayed them and threatened to kill him if he registered. On the day Gandhi went out to register he was waylaid and attacked by this and other Pathans and severely injured. When he recovered consciousness and was told that his assailants had been arrested he insisted on their being released.

Gandhi registered, but his disappointment was great when Smuts went back on his word and refused to repeal the Black Act. The Indians made a bonfire of their registration certificates and decided to defy the ban on immigration to the Transvaal. Jails began to be filled. Gandhi was arrested a second time in September 1908 and sentenced to two months' imprisonment, this time with hard labour. The struggle continued. In February 1909, he was arrested a third time and sentenced to three months' hard labour. He made such good use of his time in jail with study and prayer that he was able to declare that "the real road to ultimate happiness lies in going to jail and undergoing sufferings and privations there in the interest of one's own country and religion".

In 1911, a provisional settlement of the Asiatic question in the Transvaal brought about a suspension of the *satyagraha*. In the following year, Gokhale visited South Africa and on the eve of his departure assured Gandhi that the Union Government had promised to repeal the Black Act, to remove the racial bar from the immigration law and to abolish the £3 tax. But Gandhi had his fears which were soon borne out. The Union Government went back on its promise, and to this fire was added a very powerful fuel when a judgement of the Supreme Court ruled that only Christian marriages were legal in South Africa, thus turning at one stroke all Indian marriages in South Africa invalid and all Indian wives into concubines. This provoked Indian women, including Kasturbai, to join the struggle.

It was illegal for the Indians to cross the border from the Transvaal into Natal, and *vice versa*, without a permit. Indian women from the Tolstoy Ashram crossed the border without permits and proceeded to Newcastle to persuade the Indian miners there to strike. They succeeded and were arrested. The strike spread and thousands of miners and other Indians prepared, under Gandhi's leadership, to march to the Transvaal border in a concerted act of non-violent defiance. Gandhi made strict rules for the conduct of the *satyagrahis* who were to submit patiently and without retaliation to insult, flogging or arrest. He was arrested and sentenced, but the *satyagraha* spread. At one time there were about fifty thousand indentured labourers on strike and several thousand other Indians in jail. The Government tried repression and even shooting, and many lives were lost. "In the end", as an American biographer has put it, "General Smuts did what every Government that ever opposed Gandhi had to do—he yielded."

Gandhi was released and, in January 1914, a provisional agreement was arrived at between him and General Smuts and the main Indian demands were conceded. Gandhi's work in South Africa was now over and, in July 1914, he sailed with his wife for England where Gokhale had called him. Before sailing, he sent a pair of sandals he had made in jail to General Smuts as a gift. Recalling the gift twenty-five years later, the General wrote : "I have worn these sandals for many a summer since then, even though I may feel that I am not worthy to stand in the shoes of so great a man."

Great Soul in Beggar's Garb

IN APRIL 1893, Gandhi had sailed for South Africa, a young and inexperienced barrister in search of fortune. In January 1915 he finally returned to India, a Mahatma, with no possessions and with only one ambition—to serve his people. Though the intelligentsia had heard of his exploits in South Africa, he was not much known in India and Indians in general did not realize that "the Great Soul in beggar's garb", as the poet Tagore

called him later, had reached her shores. Nor did he know his India well. He therefore readily promised his "political guru", Gokhale, that he would spend the first year in India studying the country, with "his ears open but his mouth shut".

At the end of his year's wanderings, Gandhi settled down on the bank of the river Sabarmati, on the outskirts of Ahmedabad, where he founded an *ashram* in May 1915. He called it the Satyagraha Ashram. The inmates, about twenty-five men and women, took the vows of truth, *ahimsa*, celibacy, non-stealing, non-possession and control of the palate, and dedicated themselves to the service of the people.

Gandhi's first public address in India was on the occasion of the opening ceremony of the Banaras Hindu University in February 1916, which was distinguished by the presence of many magnates and princes and of the Viceroy himself. Speaking in English he shocked them all by expressing his "deep humiliation and shame" at being compelled "to address my countrymen in a language that is foreign to me". He shocked them more when turning to the bejewelled princes he said : "There is no salvation for India unless you strip yourselves of this jewellery and hold it in trust for your countrymen in India." Many princes walked out.

His first *satyagraha* in India was in Champaran, in Bihar, where he went in 1917 at the request of a poor peasant to inquire into the grievances of the much-exploited peasants of that district, who were compelled by British indigo planters to grow indigo on 15 per cent of their land and part with the whole crop for rent. The news that a Mahatma had arrived to inquire into their sufferings spread like wild fire and thousands of peasants left their villages to have his *darshan* and to tell him of their woes. The vested interests were up in arms and the police superintendent ordered Gandhi to leave the district. Gandhi refused and was summoned to appear in court the next day. Thousands of peasants followed him there. The embarrassed magistrate postponed the trial and released him without bail, for Gandhi refused to furnish any.

Later, the case was withdrawn and Gandhi proceeded with his inquiry. Along with the inquiry, he educated the peasants in the principles of *satyagraha* and taught them that the first condition of freedom was freedom from fear. He sent for volunteers who helped to instruct the illiterate and ignorant peasants in elementary hygiene and ran schools for their children. This kind of activity was typical of Gandhi. Even as he taught the people to fight for their rights, he taught them to fulfil their obligations. A free people must learn to stand on their feet. But the more he worked for the people the less was his presence welcome to the Government who were at last obliged to set up a committee of inquiry. The report of the committee of which Gandhi was a member went in favour of the tenant farmers. The success of his first experiment in *satyagraha* in India greatly enhanced Gandhi's reputation in this country.

Hardly had his work in Champaran been done when Gandhi was called to his *ashram* at Sabarmati by an urgent appeal from the textile workers of Ahmedabad whose dispute with the mill-owners was taking a serious turn. Having satisfied himself that the workers' demands were legitimate and mill-owners' refusal to submit the dispute to arbitration unreasonable, Gandhi asked the workers to strike, on condition that they took a pledge to remain non-violent. They agreed, but after a few days their zeal began to flag and Gandhi feared that they might break the pledge and resort to violence. Since it was the fear of starvation which drove the workers to desperation, Gandhi decided to starve himself. He declared that he would not touch food until a settlement had been reached. At the end of three days, both parties agreed on an arbitration amid general rejoicing.

Almost immediately after came the agrarian trouble in the Kheda district of Gujarat. The peasants who were on the verge of starvation were being forced by the Government to pay the usual tax. Gandhi advised *satyagraha* and persuaded all

the peasants, the well-to-do as well as the poor, to take a pledge not to pay any tax until those who could not pay were granted remission. The no-tax campaign lasted for about four months at the end of which the Government suspended the assessment for the poor peasants.

Now there took place an event which still baffles the pacifists in the West. In 1917, the Viceroy Lord Chelmsford invited Gandhi to a War Conference convened in Delhi to enlist the support of Indian leaders for the recruitment campaign. At that time Gandhi believed that the British Empire was by and large a power for good, and that since India had on the whole benefited by the British connection, it was the duty of every Indian to help the Empire in the hour of its need. Gandhi not only supported the resolution of the War Conference but actually toured the Kheda district (where previously he had led the peasants in *satyagraha*) to persuade people to enlist.

Mahatma and the Masses

IT WAS THE ROWLATT BILL with its denial of civil liberties which finally brought Gandhi into active Indian politics. From 1919 to his death in 1948, he occupied the centre of the Indian stage and was the hero of the great historical drama which culminated in the independence of his country. He changed the entire character of the political scene in India. He himself did not change. He only grew. In the thick of the battle he remained a man of God.

Since the Rowlatt Bill was not a local issue and the struggle was to be launched on an all-India scale, Gandhi pondered deeply what shape it should take. He had to rouse the people's enthusiasm and yet keep their passions from breaking into violence. Finally, he hit upon the idea of *hartal* or a national observance of mourning or protest by the closing of shops and places of business.

The *hartal* was observed all over India, by Hindus and Muslims alike, with an enthusiasm which surprised every one. Even Gandhi had not realized how great was his hold on the imagination of the Indian masses. The Government's complacency received a rude shock to see the war-time "recruiting sergeant" of the Empire turn a rebel. When Gandhi who was now in demand everywhere left for Delhi and Amritsar, he was served with a notice at Palwal station forbidding him to cross into the Punjab. On his refusal to obey the order, he was arrested and brought back to Bombay.

The news of his arrest spread like wild fire and created great excitement among the people. Crowds gathered in cities and some violence took place. When Gandhi came to Ahmedabad and found that a police officer had been killed by the mob, he was horrified and felt that "a rapier run through my body could hardly have pained me more". He suspended the *satyagraha* movement and undertook a fast for three days as penance for the violence committed by the people.

On the very day, April 13, 1919, when Gandhi announced his three-day fast in Ahmedabad, the British General Dyer ordered the massacre of unarmed and peaceful citizens attending a meeting in Jallianwala Bagh at Amritsar. Later, even the official report admitted that 400 people had been killed and between 1,000 and 2,000 wounded, though the unofficial inquiry conducted by Gandhi himself estimated 1,200 dead and 3,600 wounded. This cowardly massacre of the innocent was followed by the declaration of martial law in the Punjab, with wholesale arrests, floggings and the inhuman order by which no Indian could pass a certain street except by crawling on his belly. The events of that day which has been called by Sir Valentine Chirol as "that black day in the annals of British India" mark a turning point in the history of the Indian struggle. The moral prestige of Britain received a fatal blow. Henceforth, Gandhi could not keep away from the battle-field of Indian politics.

It was typical of Gandhi that great as was his concern over the happenings in the Punjab, he shared with equal zeal the Indian Muslims' concern at the fate of the defeated Turkish Sultan who was also the Caliph or the religious head of Islam. In fact, it was at a Muslim Conference held in Delhi in November 1919 that he first advocated non-cooperation with the British Government.

It is interesting to recall that four years earlier, when he attended the Lucknow session of the Congress, he was more an observer than a participant and had seemed to Jawaharlal Nehru "very distant and different and unpolitical". In 1920, he dominated the political scene. In fact, he re-created the Congress and turned talking politicians into active revolutionaries and anglicized leaders of society into servants of the people who henceforth wore white home-spun. He bridged the gulf between the intelligentsia and the masses and widened the concept of Swaraj to include almost every aspect of social and moral regeneration. From now on, the story of his life is the story of how Congress fought for and won India's freedom.

Like a magician, Gandhi roused a storm of enthusiasm in the country with his call to non-cooperate. He began the campaign by returning to the Viceroy the medals and decorations he had received from the Government for his war-services and humanitarian work. "I can retain", he wrote to the Viceroy, "neither respect nor affection for a government which has been moving from wrong to wrong to defend its immorality." Many Indians renounced their titles and honours, lawyers gave up their practice, students left colleges and schools, and thousands of the city-bred went into the villages to spread the message of non-violent non-cooperation with the "satanic" government and to prepare the masses to defy the law. The somnolent people woke up in a frenzy of courage and self-sacrifice. Bonfires of foreign cloth lit the sky everywhere and the hum of the spinning wheel rose like a sacrificial chant in thousands of homes. Women, secluded for centuries, marched in the streets with men and incidentally freed themselves from age-old shackles. In speech after speech, article after article in his two weeklies, *Young India* and *Navjivan*, Gandhi poured forth his passionate utterances which electrified the people. Thousands of people were put in prison and many more thousands were preparing to court arrest.

The anti-climax came suddenly in February 1922. An outbreak of mob violence in Chauri Chaura so shocked and pained Gandhi that he refused to continue the campaign and undertook a fast for five days to atone for a crime committed by others in a state of mob hysteria. Many of his colleagues protested and though Gandhi admitted that "the drastic reversal of practically the whole of the aggressive programme may be politically unsound and unwise", he maintained that "there is no doubt that it is religiously sound". He felt that "it is a million times better to *appear* untrue before the world than to *be* untrue to ourselves". Where Gandhi's conscience was concerned he was always ready to stand alone.

However, the immediate result was that the British Government found this anti-climax a convenient opportunity to arrest him. He told the English judge at the trial : "I have no personal ill-will against any single administrator, much less can I have any disaffection towards the King's person. But I hold it a virtue to be disaffected toward a government which in its totality has done more harm to India than any previous system. India is less manly under British rule than ever before. Holding such a belief I consider it a sin to have any affection for the system...The only course open to you, the Judge, is either to resign your post and thus dissociate yourself from evil, if you feel that the law you are called upon to administer is an evil and that in reality I am innocent; or to inflict on me the severest penalty if you believe that the system and the law you are assisting to administer are good for the people of this country, and that my activity is, therefore, injurious to the public weal."

The judge sentenced him to six years' simple imprisonment and expressed the

hope that "if the course of events in India should make it possible for the Government to reduce the period and release you, no one will be better pleased than I."

Prison was for Gandhi more a luxury than a punishment. He could devote more time to prayer, study and spinning than he could outside. But in January 1924 he fell seriously ill with acute appendicitis. He was removed to a hospital in Poona where a British surgeon performed the operation. While he was convalescing he was released by the Government.

What he saw of India as a free man greatly pained him. At the time of his arrest he had left his people on the wave of a great moral upsurge which had united Hindus and Muslims as never before. But in the meanwhile the Khilafat issue had been killed by Kamal Ataturk. The Muslims no longer needed Hindu support; the two communities had drifted apart. There were communal riots in several places. Not knowing how to stem this tide of frustration, he undertook a fast of twenty-one days to atone once again for the sins of his people. "It seems as if God has been dethroned," he said, announcing the fast. "Let us reinstate Him in our hearts." The fast caused considerable heart-searching, and long before it was over, pledges of amity poured in upon him from men of various communities.

For the next five years Gandhi seemingly retired from active agitational politics and devoted himself to the propagation of what he regarded as the basic national needs, namely, Hindu-Muslim unity, removal of untouchability, equality of women, popularization of hand-spinning and the reconstruction of village economy in general. "I am not interested", he wrote in June 1923, "in freeing India merely from the English yoke. I am bent upon freeing India from any yoke whatsoever." The two movements, for political freedom and for social and economic freedom, must go together.

There was also the fact that Gandhi, on his release from prison, had found the Congress divided. By 1929, however, the various groups had once more rallied under his leadership, and when on the last day of that year he himself moved the Resolution in the Congress session declaring complete independence as the goal of Congress policy, it was obvious that he was again ready to lead the nation in an open challenge to British rule. He drew up a pledge of "*Purna Swaraj*" or complete independence which was taken by millions throughout the country on January 26, 1930, which day has been celebrated as Independence Day ever since. All eyes were now turned to Sabarmati. What will the wizard of non-violence do next ?

On March 12, 1930, after having duly informed the Viceroy, Gandhi, followed by seventy-eight members of his *ashram*, both men and women, began his historic 24-day march to the sea beach at Dandi to break the law which had deprived the poor man of his right to make his own salt. This seemed a small issue, but the dramatic manner in which he announced and executed the plan, the march on foot of this unarmed man of God for 241 miles, with villagers flocking from miles around to kneel by the roadside, set the imagination of the nation aflame and roused enthusiasm such as no one had anticipated. Early in the morning of April 6, after prayers, he went to the beach and picked up a little lump of salt left by the waves. This simple act was immediately followed by a nation-wide defiance of the law. Men and women, simple villagers and sophisticated city folk, marched in thousands to invite arrest, police lathi charges and even shooting in many cases. Gandhi himself was arrested on May 4, soon after midnight. Within a few weeks about a hundred thousand men and women were in jail, throwing the mighty machinery of the British Government out of gear.

When the First Round Table Conference met in November 1930, the Labour Government was faced with an embarrassing situation. At the closing session of the Conference, on January 19, 1931, Ramsay MacDonald expressed the hope that the

Congress would be represented at the Second Round Table Conference. Gandhi and some other Congress leaders were therefore unconditionally released on January 26, exactly a year after the first independence pledge had been taken. Soon after, on February 14, the Gandhi-Irwin talks began to the disgust of Winston Churchill, who was scandalized at "the nauseating and humiliating spectacle of this one-time Inner Temple Lawyer, now seditious fakir, striding half-naked up the steps of the Viceroy's palace, there to negotiate a parley on equal terms with the representative of the King-Emperor."

Interlude in England and a Christmas Gift

ON MARCH 5 was signed the Gandhi-Irwin Pact and on August 29 Gandhi sailed for London to attend the Second Round Table Conference as the sole delegate of the Congress. "There is every chance of my returning empty-handed", he said, as he embarked. He was right. But though he returned empty-handed, his visit was not without good results. He had by now become a legend and fantastic stories, some kind, some malicious, had spread about him. It was good therefore for the British people to see for themselves how simple, kindly and irresistible was the charm of his personality, how universal his sympathies, how keen his humour and infectious his laughter.

In London, he declined to go to a hotel and stayed at Kingsley Hall, a social service centre in the East End, where he soon won the hearts of the young and old. His kindliness and his humour broke down the barriers of national and race prejudice. When asked why he chose to wear only a loin-cloth, he replied, "You people wear plus-fours, mine are minus-fours." He went to Lancashire where his agitation against foreign cloth had caused unemployment. The workers cheered him and one of the unemployed said : "I am one of the unemployed, but if I was in India I would say the same thing that Mr. Gandhi is saying."

On his way back he visited Romain Rolland in Switzerland. It was at a meeting of the pacifists at Lausanne that he explained why rather than say, God is Truth, he would say, Truth is God.

The day he reached Bombay he said : "I am not conscious of a single experience throughout my three months' stay in England and Europe that made me feel that after all East is East and West is West. On the contrary, I have been convinced more than ever that human nature is much the same, no matter under what clime it flourishes, and that if you approached people with trust and affection you would have ten-fold trust and thousand-fold affection returned to you."

But the immediate experience that awaited him hardly bore out this optimism. Even before he had reached India, the effect of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact had been destroyed by the repressive policy of the new Viceroy, Lord Willingdon. India was being ruled by Ordinances, and shootings and arrests had become the order of the day. Jawaharlal Nehru who was coming to Bombay to receive Gandhi was arrested on the way. "I take it", said Gandhi when he landed on December 28, 1931, "that these are Christmas gifts from Lord Willingdon, our Christian Viceroy." A week later Gandhi himself was arrested and locked up in the Yeravada Jail without trial.

This time he was not "happy as a bird" as he usually was behind prison walls, for his mind was agitated by the news that the British Government proposed to introduce in the new constitution for India, separate electorates not only for the Muslims but for the "untouchables" as well, thereby causing a permanent vivisection of the Hindu community. He therefore wrote to Ramsay MacDonald announcing his resolve to undertake "a fast unto death". In the early hours of the morning of September 20, he wrote a letter to Tagore. "This is early morning, 3 o'clock of Tuesday. I enter the fiery gates at noon. If you can bless the effort I want it. You

have been a true friend because you have been a candid friend." Even as he handed the letter to be posted came a telegram from Tagore. "It is worth sacrificing the precious life for the sake of India's unity and her social integrity...Our sorrowing hearts will follow your sublime penance with reverence and love."

Tagore's words expressed the sentiment of the whole nation. The fiery gates which Gandhi thus voluntarily entered scorched the heart of every Hindu. The conscience of the Hindu community was roused as never before. Every one shared the guilt for the curse of untouchability and if Gandhi died in this penance the sin would rest on all. After five days of acute national suspense and anxiety, the leaders of the caste Hindus and of the "untouchables", whom Gandhi called Harijans (children of God), signed a pact which was acceptable to Gandhi. On the following day, when Gandhi's condition was causing grave anxiety to the doctors, came the news that the British Government had accepted the new formula. In the afternoon, Gandhi broke the fast. If any single act can be said to have broken the backbone of untouchability in India, it was this fast. Even before it ended, Hindus and Harijans were publicly fraternizing in the streets of all cities and many orthodox temples had been thrown open to the Harijans.

For the next six years Gandhi's main energies were devoted to the uplift of the Harijans and the propagation of a comprehensive plan for village reconstruction, including education. He ceaselessly preached Hindu-Muslim unity and tried to wean the impetuous youth from the cult of violence and terrorism. He handed over the Sabarmati Ashram to a Harijan Society and shifted his residence to another ashram at Wardha. "India lives in her villages, not in her cities", he said. "When I succeed in ridding the villages of their poverty, I have won Swaraj." His ideas had undergone a gradual, almost imperceptible change, since he wrote *Hind Swaraj*, a quarter of a century ago. His antipathy to industrialism had been reinforced by its association with foreign imperialism. "No sophistry, no jugglery in figures", he had said in 1922, "can explain away the evidence that the skeletons in many villages present to the naked eye. I have no doubt whatsoever that both England and the town dwellers of India will have to answer, if there is a God above, for this crime against humanity which is perhaps unequalled in history." Meanwhile, his understanding of the nature of machine production had both widened and deepened. "What I object to", he said in 1924, "is the craze for machinery, not machinery as such ... The impetus behind it all is not the philanthropy to save labour, but greed. It is against this constitution of things that I am fighting with all my might." Like all truly great minds, Gandhi's sympathies grew wider with age and his understanding calmer and deeper.

Quit India

WITH THE OUTBREAK of the war in 1939, Gandhi was dragged back into the political arena. He had loyally supported the Empire in the First World War. In the Boer War, even though his moral sympathies were with the Boers who were fighting for their independence, he had offered his services to the Empire out of a sense of loyalty. His feelings were different now, though, as he stated, "my sympathies are wholly with the Allies." He had came to believe "all war to be wholly wrong". He was also aware of the anomaly in Britain's position in fighting for freedom while denying India hers. There were many patriots in India who felt that this was the hour to strike, since Britain's difficulty was India's opportunity. But Gandhi refused to countenance such an attitude. "We do not seek our independence out of Britain's ruin. That is not the way of non-violence."

The majority of Congress leaders would have welcomed participation in the war effort, provided India could do so as an equal partner with Britain. Gandhi did not believe in conditional non-violence, but he was realistic enough to know that he could

not carry the majority of the Congress leaders, who were at best patriot-politicians, not saints, along the arduous path of absolute non-violence. Nor was he vain enough to insist on the Congress accepting his terms as the price of his leadership, though he knew that in the impending political crisis the party could not do without him. He therefore effaced himself and advised the nation to accept the Congress stand and pleaded with the British on its behalf.

But the British Government was in no mood to listen and Winston Churchill was frank enough to say that he had not become "the King's First Minister in order to preside at the liquidation of the British Empire." In the meanwhile, the situation rapidly deteriorated. The British were unable to stem the Japanese advance to the Indian border. The people were becoming increasingly restive and impatient, and Gandhi feared that if this excitement were not given an organized non-violent expression, it would break out in sporadic disorder and violence. Since the British did not seem able at that time to ensure India's defence and were not willing to let India defend herself, Gandhi called upon them to "quit India" and prepared to organize *satyagraha*. Addressing the historic session of the All India Congress Committee on August 7, 1942, he said : "Our quarrel is not with the British people; we fight their imperialism. The proposal for the withdrawal of British power did not come out of anger. It came to enable India to play its due part at the present critical juncture."

He had not yet formulated any clear plan of action. In any case, he wanted to see the Viceroy before doing so. But the initiative was taken away from his hands, for in the early hours of the morning of August 9, he and other leaders of the Congress were arrested. Disorders broke out immediately all over India, many of them violent. The Government having deprived the people of non-violent leadership answered violence with greater violence till India virtually became a country under armed occupation.

Gandhi was interned in the Aga Khan Palace near Poona. He was greatly perturbed by the terror reigning in the country and at the British Government's charge that he was responsible for violence. He entered into a long correspondence with the Government which ended in his fasting for twenty-one days. During the fast, which began on February 10, 1943, his condition grew very critical and it was feared that he would not survive. Fortunately he did. This period in prison was one of tribulation and tragedy for Gandhi. Six days after his arrest, Mahadev Desai, his secretary and companion for twenty-four years, died suddenly of heart failure. In December 1943, Kasturbai fell ill and in February of the following year she, too, died.

The mental strain he had gone through since his arrest told on Gandhi's health and six weeks after Kasturbai's death he had a severe attack of malaria. On May 3, the doctor's bulletin described his general condition as "giving rise to anxiety." The Government, embarrassed by the public agitation caused by the news of his illness, released him unconditionally on May 6. For a long time after, he was so weak that to conserve his energy he was obliged to observe long periods of silence.

But weak or strong, he could not sit idle and watch the situation in the country rapidly deteriorate. He asked to see the Viceroy but Lord Wavell declined to meet him. He knew that the British were encouraging Muslim demands to keep the Hindus and Muslims divided and were using this difference as an excuse for their continued occupation of India. All through his political career he had worked passionately for Hindu-Muslim accord. In 1919, he had made the Khilafat cause his own and had later fasted to bring about communal harmony. But the more he tried to placate the Muslims the more adamant and extravagant grew their demands until their leader Jinnah would be satisfied with nothing less than a separate State for the Muslims.

Freedom and Martyrdom

THE BRITISH WERE unable to control the situation in India which was steadily becoming worse. Famine and disorder had sapped the foundations of imperial prestige. Britain emerged from the war victorious but physically exhausted and morally sober. The General Elections of 1945 returned Labour to power and Mr. Attlee, the British Prime Minister, unwilling to lose India altogether by persisting in the Churchillian policy of blood and iron, promised "an early realization of self-government in India". In the meanwhile, elections were to be held and a Constituent Assembly convened to frame a constitution for a united India. A Cabinet Mission arrived from England to discuss with Indian leaders the future shape of a free and united India, but failed to bring the Congress and Muslim League together. Having encouraged Muslim separatism the British were now unable to control it.

On August 12, 1946, the Viceroy invited Jawaharlal Nehru to form an interim government. Jinnah declared a "Direct Action Day" in Bengal which resulted in an orgy of bloodshed. Shootings and stabbings took place in many places in India. This blood-red prologue to freedom was pure agony for Gandhi. He was staying in the Bhangi Colony (untouchables' quarters) in Delhi from where day after day he raised his voice against violence. But his voice seemed a voice in the wilderness.

Then came the news of a large-scale outbreak of violence against the Hindu minority in the Noakhali district of East Bengal. Gandhi could no longer sit quiet. He must beard the lion in his own den and teach the two communities to live and let live if necessary at the cost of his life. If he could not do that his message of non-violence had fallen on deaf ears and the freedom to which he had brought India so near was not the freedom he had dreamt of. And so, against the pleadings of his Congress colleagues who did not wish that he should risk his life, he left for Noakhali in Bengal where the Muslim League government was in power. While in Calcutta, he heard that the Hindus of Bihar had retaliated against the Muslims, repeating the outrages of Noakhali. Bitter sorrow filled Gandhi's heart, for he always felt the misdeeds of his co-religionists more acutely than he did of others, and Bihar was the land where he had launched his first *satyagraha* in India. As penance, he resolved to keep himself "on the lowest diet possible" which would become "a fast unto death if the erring Biharis have not turned over a new leaf". Fortunately, "the erring Biharis" were restored to sanity by this warning and Gandhi proceeded to Noakhali.

In the noble book of Gandhi's life this chapter is the noblest. Just when political freedom was almost achieved and the State apparatus of power was his for the asking, he renounced it and embraced the hazards of a lone pilgrimage to plant the message of love and courage in a wilderness of hatred and terror. In a region where 80 per cent of the people were Muslim, most of whom hostile, where there were hardly any roads and almost no means of modern communication, where hundreds of Hindus had been butchered, their women raped and thousands forcibly converted and where hordes of unruly fanatics still roamed the countryside in search of loot and fresh victims, Gandhi pitched his camp, refusing police protection and keeping only one Bengali interpreter and one stenographer with him. At the age of seventy-seven, he went barefoot from village to village, through a most difficult countryside, where low, marshy patches had to be crossed on precarious, improvised bridges of bamboo poles. He lived on local fruit and vegetables and worked day and night to plant courage in the hearts of the Hindus and love in the hearts of the Muslims. "I have only one object in view and it is a clear one : namely, that God should purify the hearts of Hindus and Muslims and the two communities should be free from suspicion and fear of one another."

Thus he lived and suffered and taught in Noakhali from November 7, 1946, to March 2, 1947, when he had to leave for Bihar in answer to persistent requests. In Bihar also, he did what he had done in Noakhali. He went from village to village,

mostly on foot, asking people to make amends for the wrongs they had done to the Muslims. Unlike Noakhali, he was besieged by worshipping crowds wherever he went in Bihar. He collected money for the relief of the injured and homeless Muslims. Many women gave away their jewellery. Harrowing tales were pouring in of the massacre of the Hindus in Rawalpindi in the Punjab and but for Gandhi's presence the Biharis might have again lost their heads in a frenzy of retaliation. "If ever you become mad again, you must destroy me first", he told them.

In May 1947, he was called to Delhi where the new Viceroy Lord Mountbatten had succeeded in persuading the Congress leaders to accept Jinnah's insistent demand for the partition of India as a condition precedent for British withdrawal. Gandhi was against partition at any cost but he was unable to convince the Congress leaders of the wisdom of his stand.

On August 15, 1947, India was partitioned and became free. Gandhi declined to attend the celebrations in the capital and went to Calcutta where communal riots were still raging. And then on the day of independence a miracle happened. A year-old riot stopped as if by magic and Hindus and Muslims began to fraternize with one another. Gandhi spent the day in fast and prayer.

Unfortunately, the communal frenzy broke loose again on August 31, and while he was staying in a Muslim house, the safety of his own person was threatened. On the following day he went on a fast which was "to end only if and when sanity returns to Calcutta". The effect was magical. Those who had indulged in loot, arson and murder amid shouts of glee, came and knelt by his bedside and begged for forgiveness. On September 4, the leaders of all communities in the city brought him a signed pledge that Calcutta would see no more of such outrages. Then Gandhi broke the fast. Calcutta kept the pledge even when many other cities were plunged in violence in the wake of Partition.

When Gandhi returned to Delhi in September 1947, the city was in the grip of communal hysteria. Ghastly tales of what had happened to Hindus and Sikhs in West Pakistan had kindled passions which burst into a conflagration when the uprooted victims of this tragedy poured into the city. In a frenzy of vengeance Hindus and Sikhs had taken the law into their hands and were looting Muslim houses, seizing mosques and stabbing innocent passers-by. The Government had taken stern measures but it was helpless without public co-operation. Into this chaos of fear and terror came this little man in the loin-cloth to bring courage to the frightened, comfort to the afflicted and sanity to the frenzied.

On his birthday, October 2, when messages and greetings poured in from all over the world, he asked: "Where do congratulations come in? Would it not be more appropriate to send condolences? There is nothing but anguish in my heart. .. I cannot live while hatred and killing mar the atmosphere."

His anguish continued and increased. Though his presence had calmed the fury in Delhi, sporadic violence had occurred. The tension was still there and the Muslims could not move about freely in the streets. Gandhi was anxious to go to Pakistan to help the harassed and frightened minorities there but could not leave Delhi until the mood of the people was such as to assure him that the madness would not flare up again. He felt helpless and since, as he put it, "I have never put up with helplessness in all my life", he went on a fast on January 13, 1948. "God sent me the fast", he said. He asked people not to worry about him and to "turn the searchlight inward".

It was turned, although it is difficult to say how deep the light penetrated. On January 18, after a week of painful suspense and anxiety, representatives of various communities and organizations in Delhi including the militant Hindu organization

known as the R.S.S., came to Birla House where Gandhi lay on a cot, weak but cheerful, and gave him a written pledge that "we shall protect the life, property and faith of the Muslims and that the incidents which have taken place in Delhi will not happen again". Gandhi then broke the fast amid the chanting of passages from the various scriptures of the world.

Though the fast had touched the hearts of millions all over the world, its effect on the Hindu extremists was different. They were incensed at the success of the fast and felt that Gandhi had blackmailed the Hindu conscience to appease Pakistan.

On the second day after the fast while Gandhi was at his usual evening prayers, a bomb was thrown at him. Fortunately it missed the mark. Gandhi sat unmoved and continued his discourse.

It had been his practice for many years to pray with the crowd. Every evening, wherever he was, he held his prayers in an open ground, facing a large congregation. No orthodox ritual was followed at these prayers. Verses from the scriptures of various religions were recited and hymns sung. At the end Gandhi would address a few words in Hindi to the congregation, not necessarily on a religious theme but on any topic of the day. Whatever the topic, he raised it to a moral and spiritual plane so that even when he talked of a political issue it was as if a religious man were teaching the way of righteousness.

Sometimes these congregations were of a few hundred only and sometimes they ran into hundreds of thousands, depending on the place where the prayers were held. Men of all faiths and of all political persuasions were free to come. There was no restriction. Sitting on a raised platform he was always an easy target. So far the only protection he had needed was from the unbounded adulation of the adoring crowds anxious to touch his feet as is the Hindu way of showing reverence. But now the times were unhappy. Violent passions had been aroused. Hatred was in the air. Hindu fanatics were impatient with his doctrine of love and looked upon him as the main stumbling block to their lust for vengeance against Muslim atrocities in Pakistan. As in Pakistan, so here, the cry of religion in danger served as a cloak of idealism for the demon of barbaric passions. He had been warned. The police were nervous. But Gandhi refused any kind of police protection. He cared not to live except by the power of love. Forty years earlier when his life was threatened by a Pathan in South Africa, he had replied: "Death is the appointed end of all life. To die by the hand of a brother, rather than by disease or in such other way, cannot be for me a matter of sorrow. And if, even in such a case, I am free from the thought of anger or hatred against my assailant, I know that will redound to my eternal welfare."

These sublime words proved to be prophetic. On January 30, 1948, ten days after the bomb incident, Gandhi hurriedly went up the few steps of the prayer ground in the large park of the Birla House. He had been detained by a conference with the Deputy Prime Minister, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, and was late by a few minutes. He loved punctuality and was worried that he had kept the congregation waiting. "I am late by ten minutes," he murmured. "I should be here at the stroke of five." He raised his hands and touched the palms together to greet the crowd that was waiting. Every one returned the greeting. Many came forward wanting to touch his feet. They were not allowed to do so, as Gandhi was already late. But a young Hindu from Poona forced his way forward and while seeming to do obeisance fired three point-blank shots from a small automatic pistol aimed at the heart. Gandhi fell, his lips uttering the name of God (*He Ram*). Before medical aid could arrive the heart had ceased to beat—the heart that had beat only with love of man.

Thus died the Mahatma, at the hands of one of his own people, to the eternal glory of what he had lived for and to the eternal shame of those who failed to

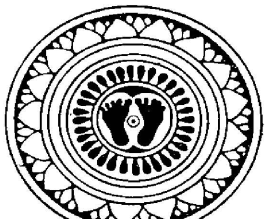
understand that he was the best representative of the religion for which he suffered martyrdom.

The nation's feeling was best expressed by Prime Minister Nehru when with a trembling voice and a heart full of grief he gave the news to the people on the radio:

"The light has gone out of our lives and there is darkness everywhere and I do not quite know what to tell you and how to say it. Our beloved leader, Bapu as we call him, the father of our nation, is no more ... The light has gone out, I said, and yet I was wrong. For the light that shone in this country was no ordinary light. The light that has illumined this country for these many years will illumine this country for many more years, and a thousand years later that light will still be seen in this country, and the world will see it and it will give solace to innumerable hearts. For that light represented the living truth, and the eternal man was with us with his eternal truth reminding us of the right path, drawing us from error, taking this ancient country to freedom ..."

Such men cannot die, for they live in their achievements. His were many, each one of which, judged by the greatness of its execution or in its results for human welfare, would have made his name immortal anywhere in the world. He brought freedom from foreign subjection to a fifth of the human race. The freedom he wrought for India naturally includes that of Pakistan, for the latter was an offshoot of the former. Of no less importance was what he did for those who were once known as the untouchables. He freed millions of human beings from the shackles of caste tyranny and social indignity. By his insistence that freedom was to be measured by the well-being of the millions who live in the villages, he laid the foundation for a new way of life which may one day well provide an effective alternative to both a regimented and an acquisitive economy. His martyrdom shamed his people out of communal hysteria and helped to establish the secular and democratic character of the Indian State.

The moral influence of his personality and of his gospel and technique of non-violence cannot be weighed in any material scale. Nor is its value limited to any particular country or generation. It is his imperishable gift to humanity.



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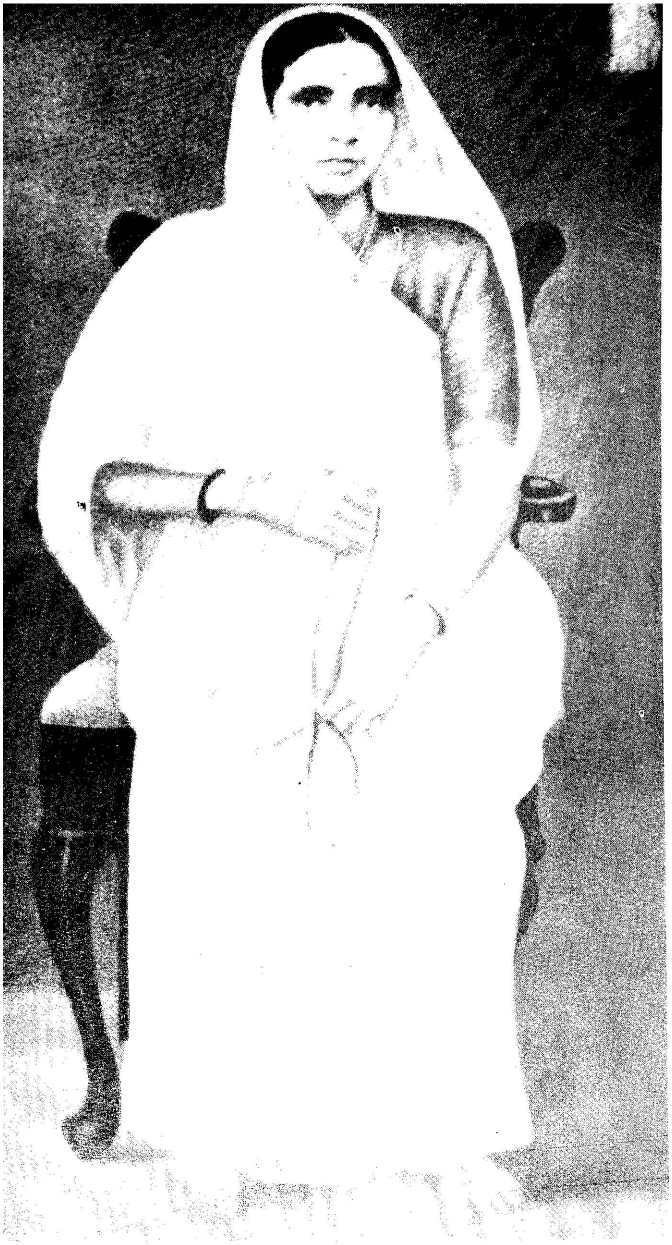
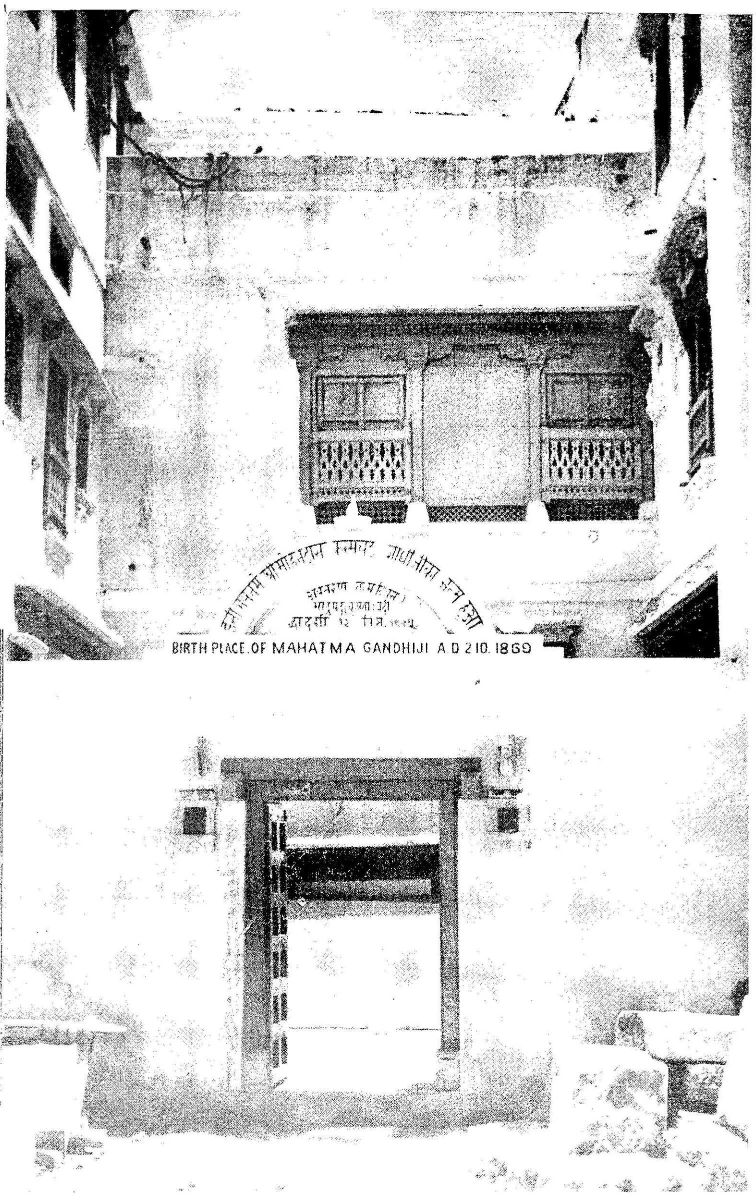
THE FORMATIVE YEARS



Putlibai, Gandhiji's mother, was a pious woman and left a deep impress on her son's mind.

Karamchand Uttamchand Gandhi, Gandhiji's father, served as the Dewan (Prime Minister) of the princely states of Porbandar, Rajkot and Vankaner on the western coast of India.



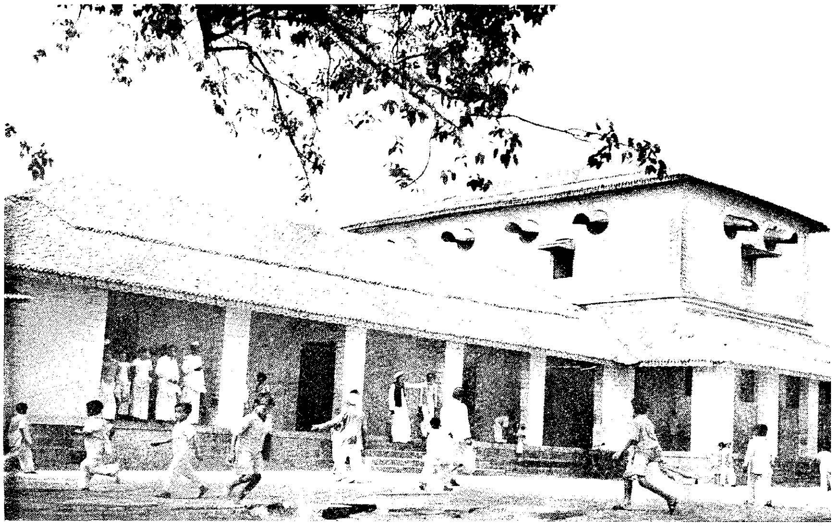
The house at Porbandar, Gujarat, where Gandhiji was born on October 2, 1869

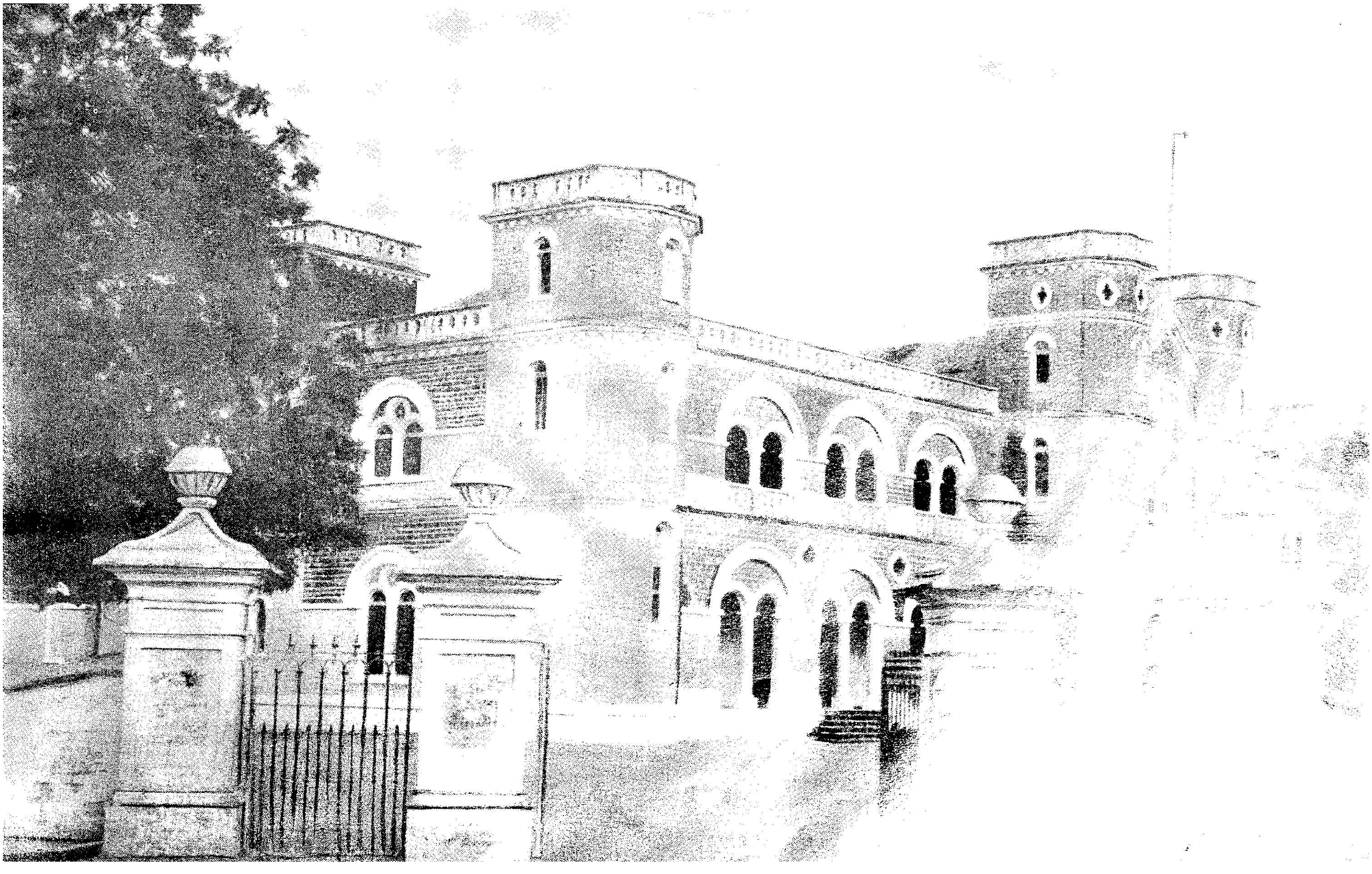
Gandhiji was seven when his family moved from Porbandar to Rajkot. At the age of thirteen, he was married to Kasturba who was also of the same age.

Mohandas Gandhi (left), aged seventeen, with his brother Laxmidas. The two brothers were close friends; Laxmidas, two years later, helped his brother to go for studies abroad.

[library stamp]

The primary school at Rajkot (right) which Gandhiji attended before he moved to the Alfred High School (below), also at Rajkot. He went for a while to a college at Bhavnagar.



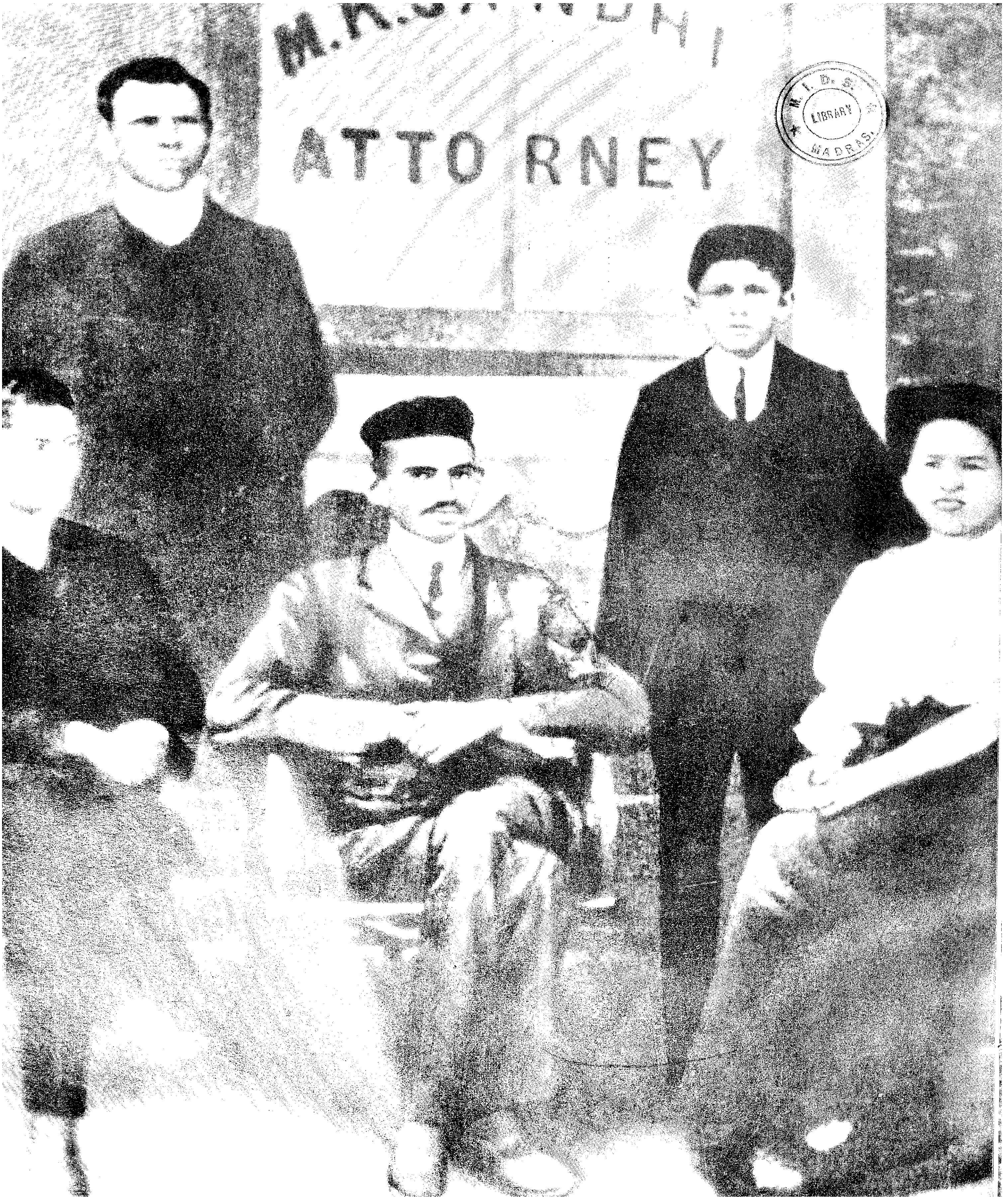


Gandhiji as a law student in London. He was nearly nineteen when he went to England for higher studies. Shortly after his arrival in London, he became a member of the Vegetarian Society (below).

Overleaf: Gandhiji as a barrister at Johannesburg, South Africa

The Gita, and the ideas of Tolstoy (right), Ruskin (below right) and Raichand (below left) exercised a profound influence on Gandhiji's mind.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN DAYS



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(Opposite page) M. K. Gandhi, Attorney, with his office colleagues at Johannesburg. Soon after his arrival in South Africa in connection with a lawsuit in 1893, the young barrister initiated and led the South African Indians' struggle against racial discrimination.

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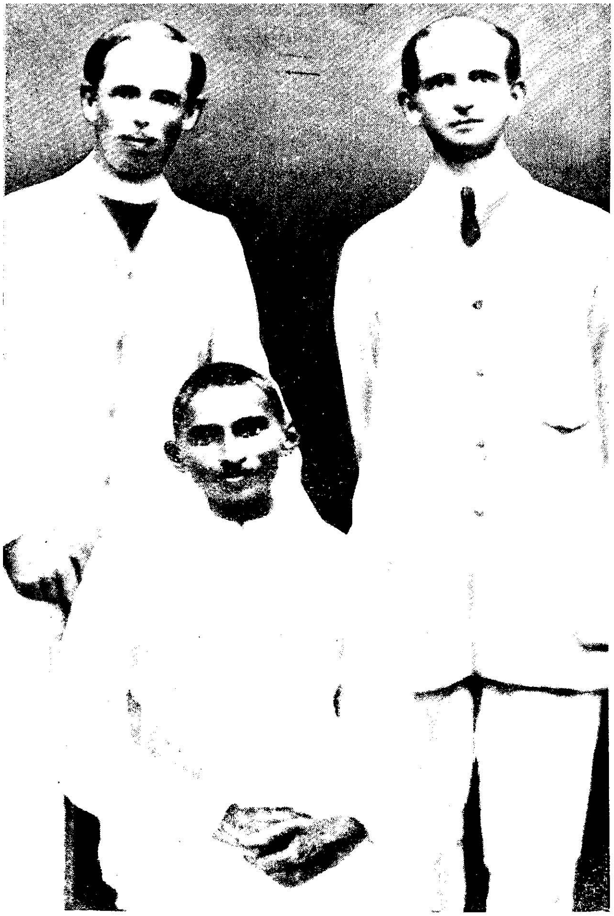
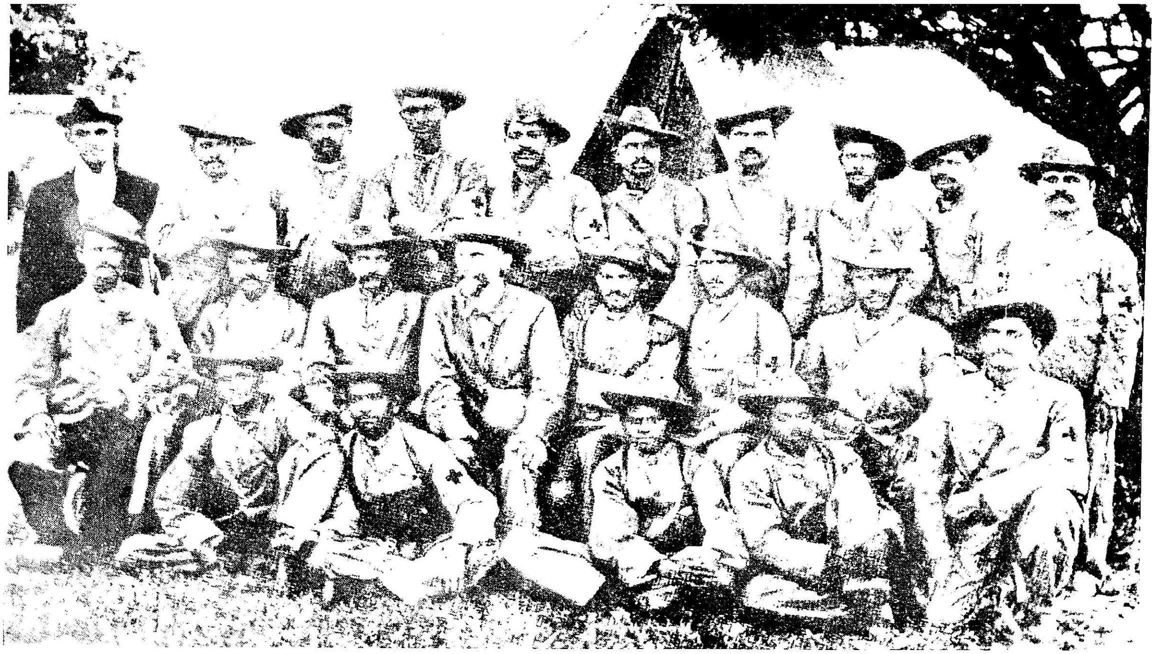
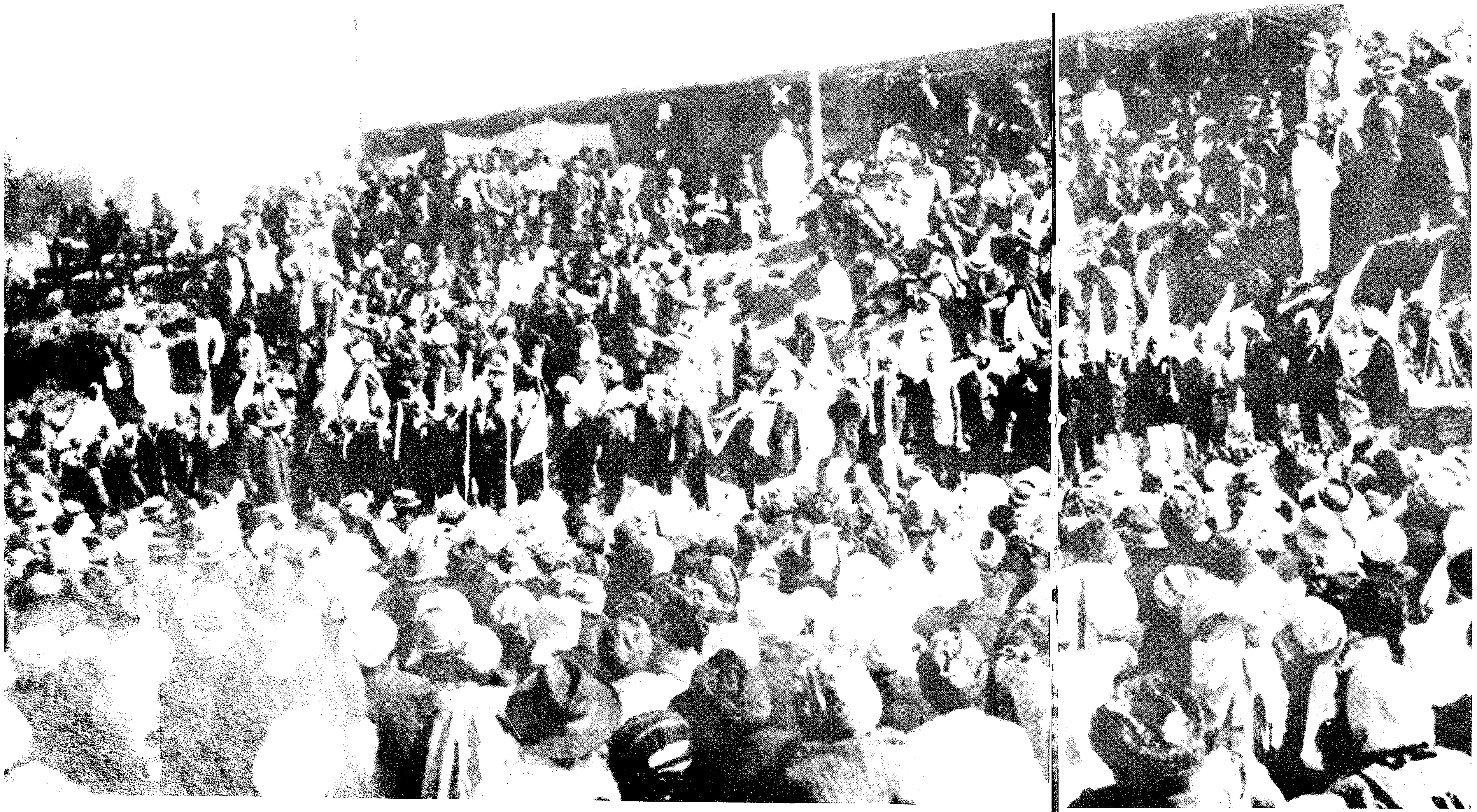
Gandhiji and Kasturba with fellow settlers at the Phoenix settlement, Natal. This settlement, founded by Gandhiji in 1904, was inspired by Ruskin's *Unto This Last*.



Gandhiji with Miss Schlesin, his secretary, and Kallenbach at Johannesburg (above), and with C. F. Andrews and W. W. Pearson (left). These four Europeans were among the earliest to be influenced by Gandhiji's ideas. (Below) Gandhiji with Kallenbach and others at the Tolstoy Farm, another settlement founded by him in 1910



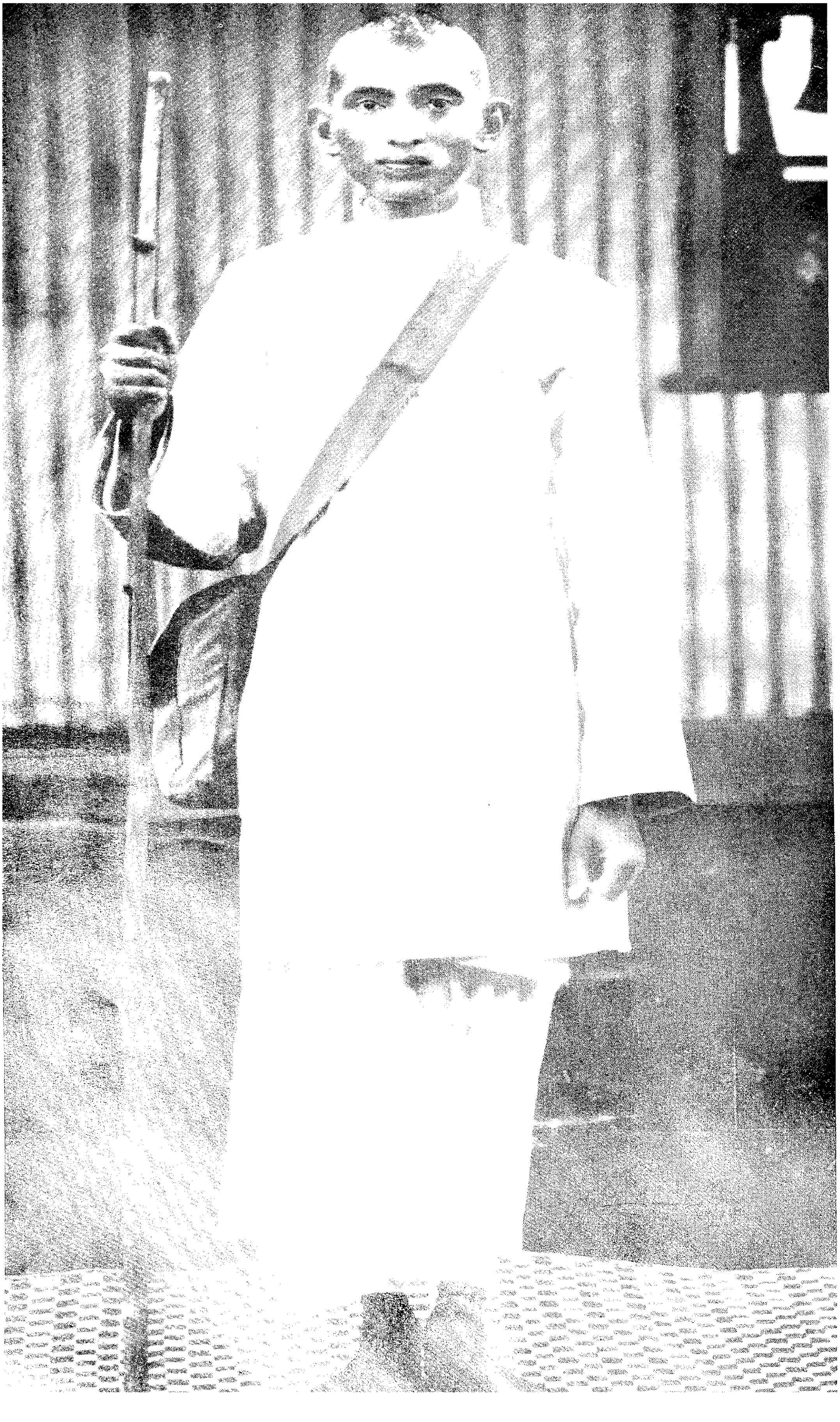
Although Gandhiji opposed the racial policies of the ruling authority in South Africa, his passion for serving humanity prompted him to form a body of Indian volunteers during the Boer War in 1899 and the Zulu Rebellion in 1906. (Above) Gandhiji with the Indian Ambulance Corps during the Boer War and (right) in the uniform of a Sergeant-Major of the Stretcher-bearer Corps during the Zulu Rebellion. He was decorated for his services during the two campaigns



Gandhiji aroused the Indians in South Africa to wage a non-violent struggle against unjust laws. (Above) he is seen addressing a large meeting of Indians in Verulam.

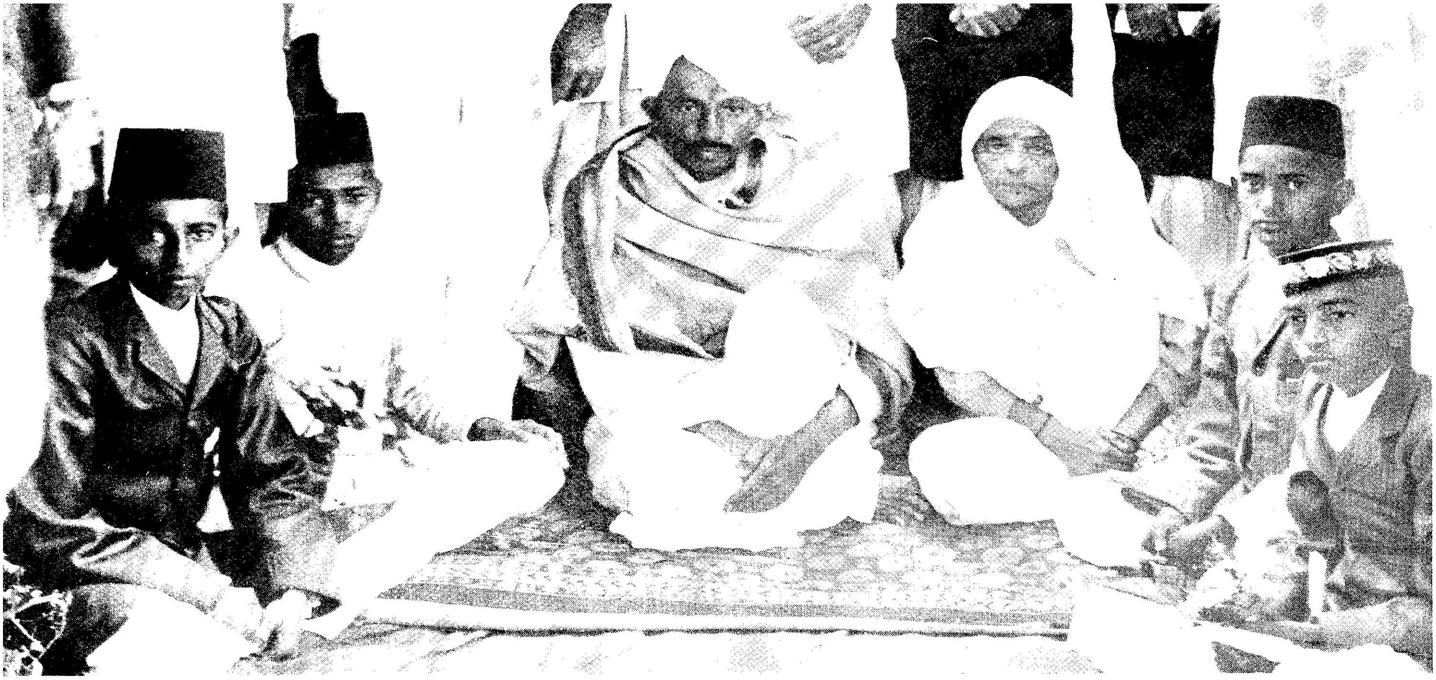
Gandhiji at the inauguration of the Natal Indian Congress, 1894

At the reception in Durban to Gopal Krishna Gokhale who visited South Africa in 1912. Gandhiji looked upon Gokhale as his political guru



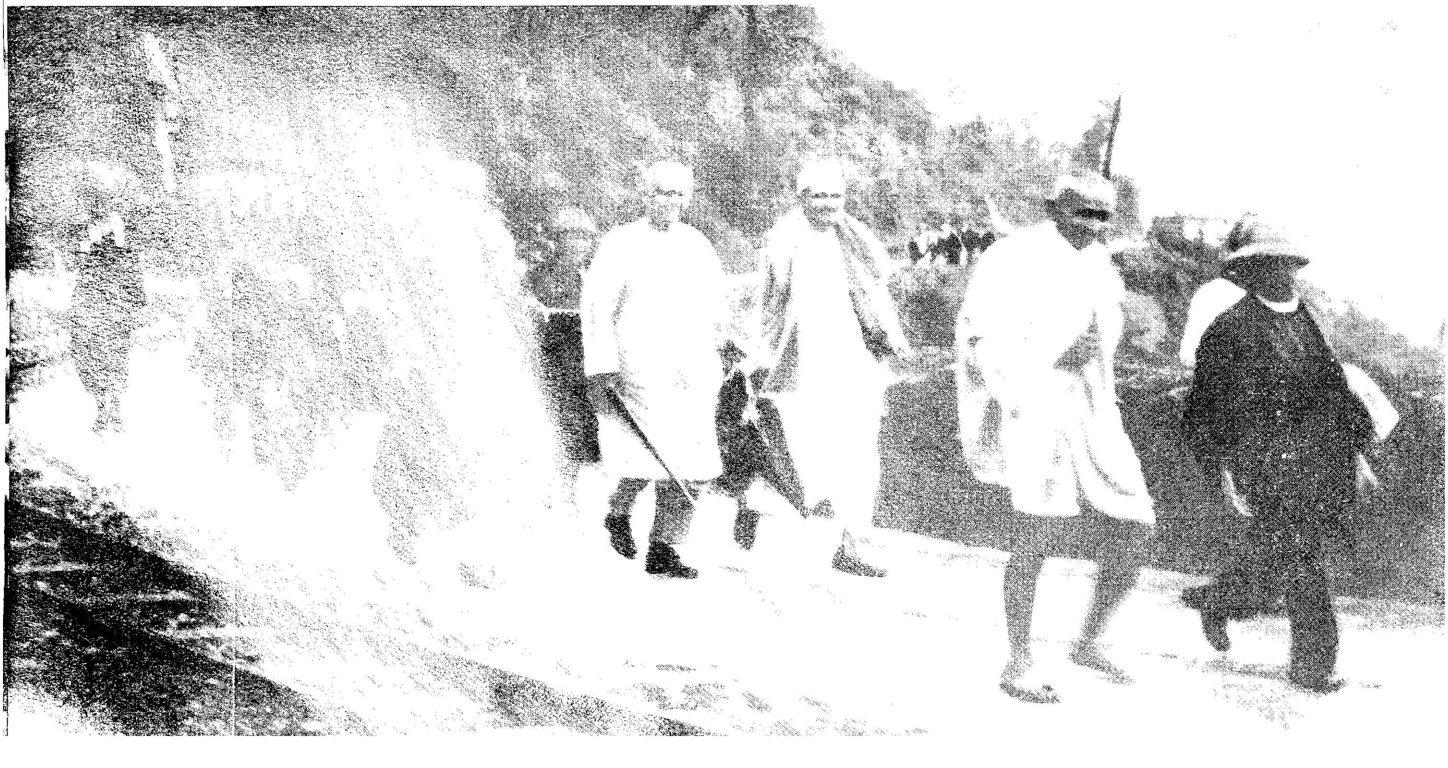
Gandhiji as a *satya-grahi* in South Africa

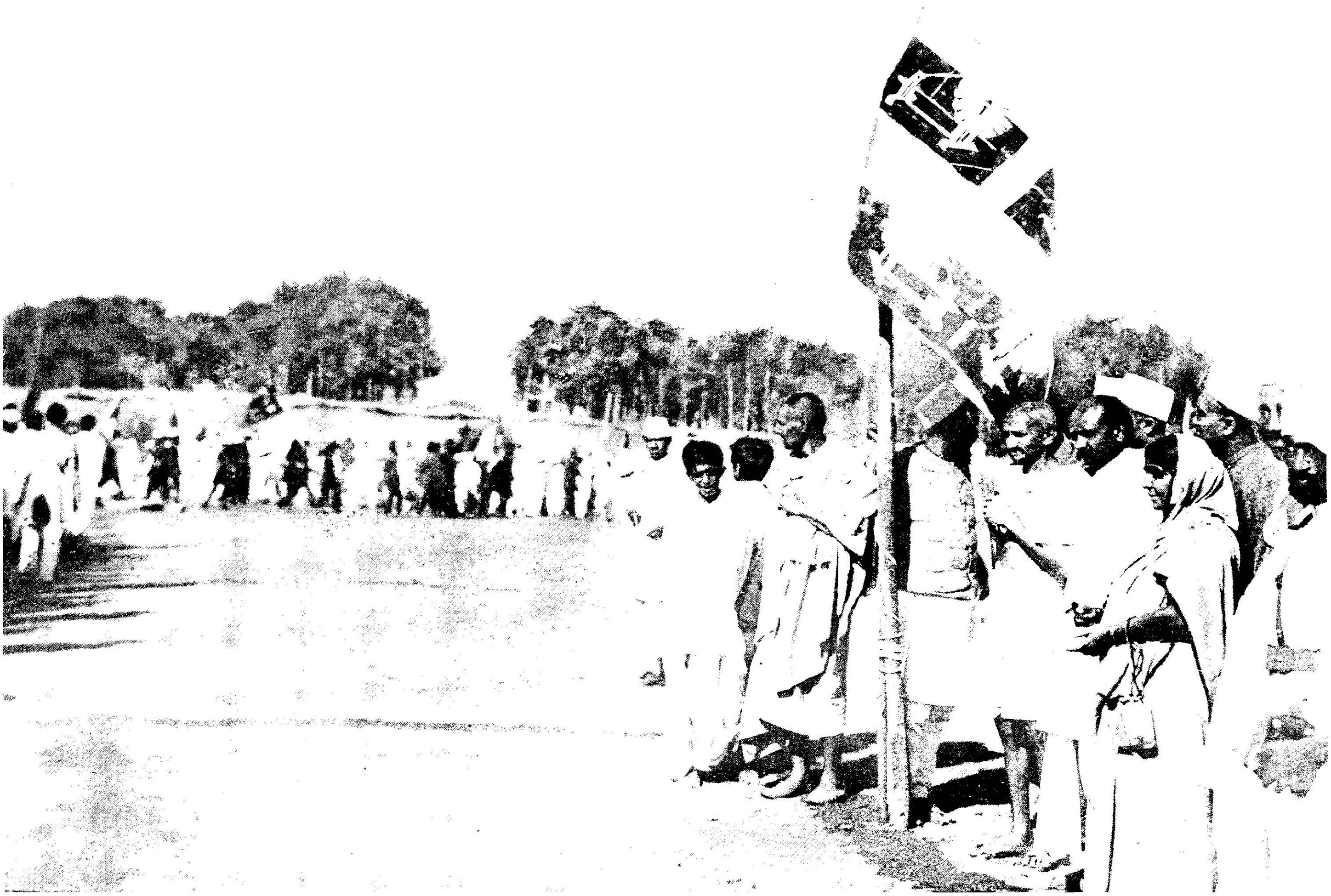
THE STRUGGLE IN INDIA



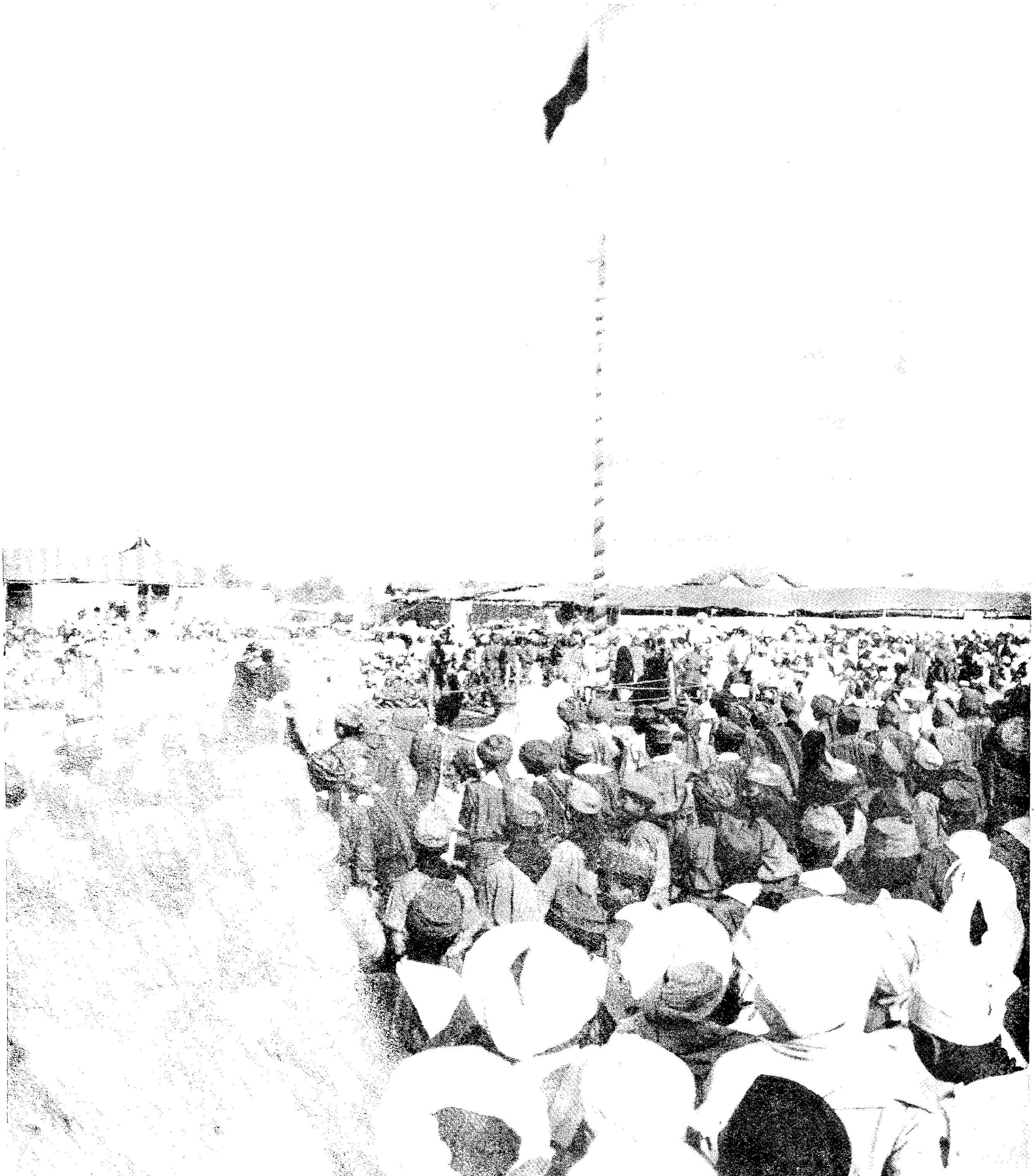
Gandhiji returned to India in January 1915. One of his first public appearances was at a reception in Ahmedabad (opposite page top). On a visit to Karachi, in 1916, he was taken out in a procession (opposite page bottom). (Below) Gandhiji in 1918 when he led a *satyagraha* by the peasants of Kheda, Gujarat, against unjust taxation. His first *satyagraha* in India, however, was against the exploitation of the poor peasants of Champaran, Bihar, in 1917.

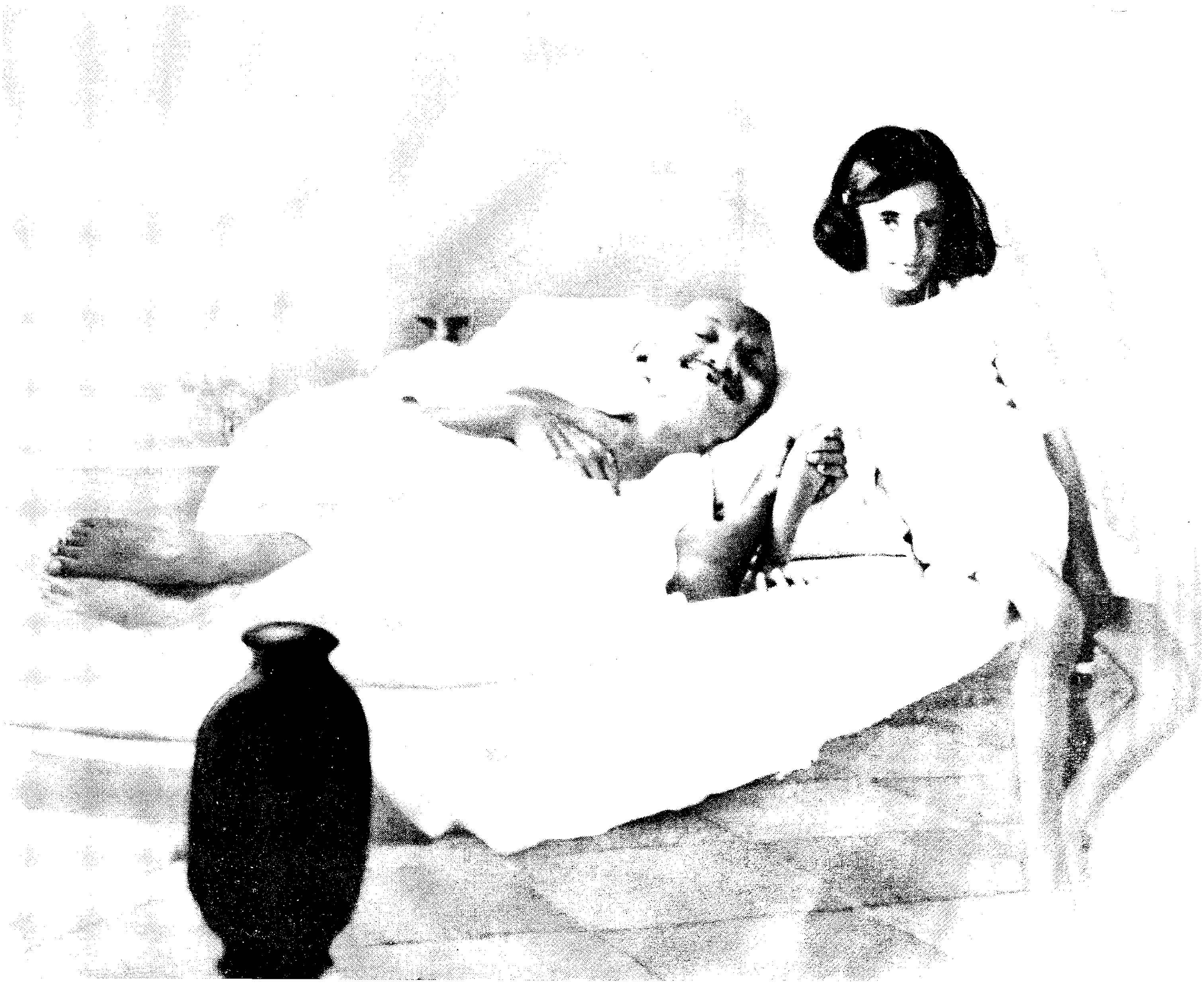
G. A. Natesan, seen (left) with Gandhiji, Kasturba and Muhammed Yakub Hasan, was Gandhiji's host during his South Indian tour in 1915. (Below) Gandhiji taking a walk with C. R. Das in Darjeeling. (Opposite page top) at Santiniketan, Gandhiji was received by poet Tagore, who, in a letter dated February 18, 1915, used the title 'Mahatma' with Gandhiji's name. (Opposite page bottom) Gandhiji with Annie Besant, Srinivasa Sastri and Satyamurthi.



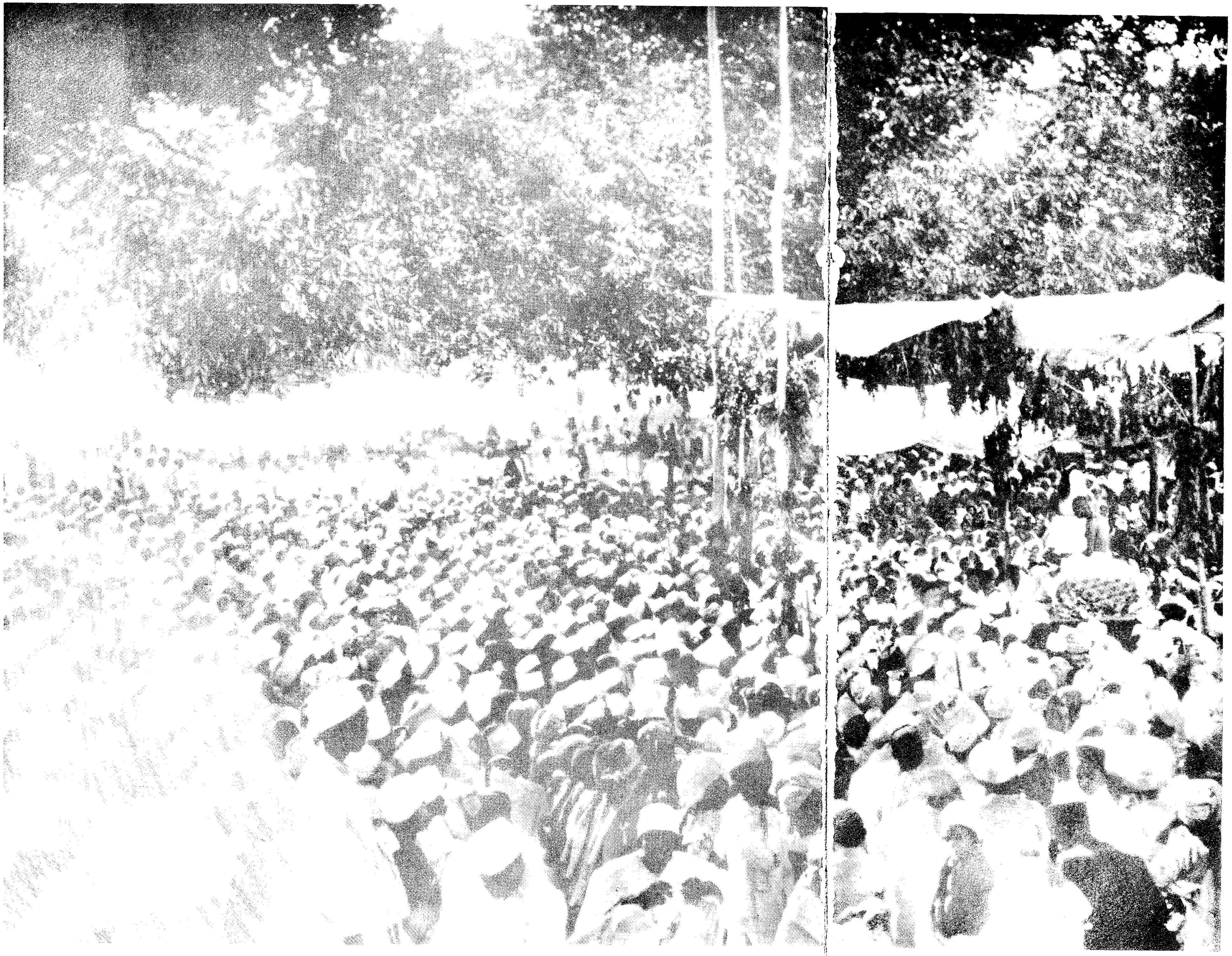


Soon after the termination of the First World War, the Government introduced Rowlatt Bill to gag political expression in India. Gandhiji issued a call for a nation-wide protest. The response was unprecedented. Ruthless repression (left below) followed. The Jallianwala Bagh massacre took place on April 13, 1919. Khilafat agitation began a few months later. In fact, it was at a Muslim conference held in Delhi in November 1919 that Gandhiji first advocated non-cooperation with the British Government. During the early phase of the Non-cooperation Movement, for a short period, Gandhiji adopted a simple headgear which came to be known as Gandhi Cap (left top). (Above) Gandhiji at the Ahmedabad session of the Congress in December 1921, when the Non-cooperation Movement was at its height. From that time onwards, Gandhiji and Congress became synonymous.



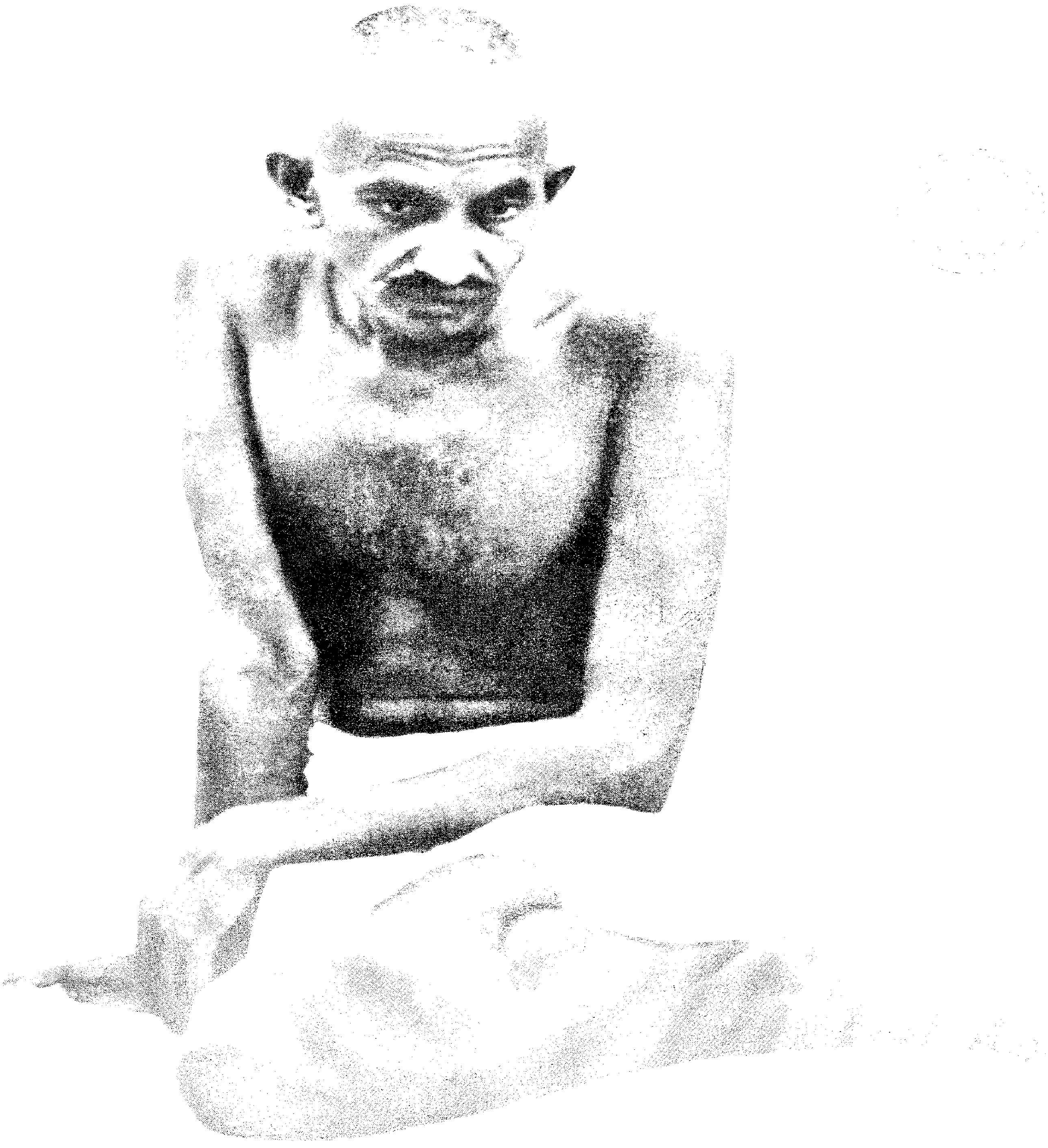


(Left) In December 1924 Gandhiji presided over the Belgaum session of the Congress, and issued a fervent call for the adoption of *swadeshi*. The same year, Gandhiji undertook a twentyone-day fast in Delhi as a penance for communal disturbances in certain parts of India. With him (above) is Indira Gandhi, then six years old.



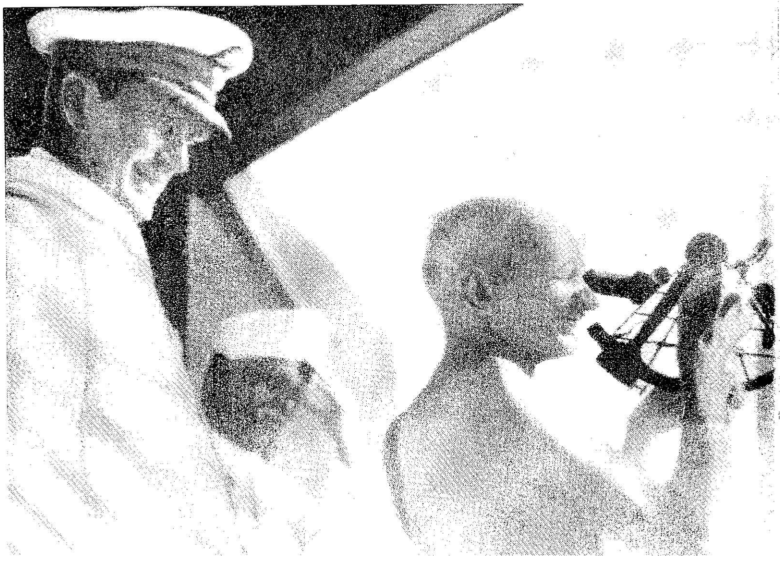
Gandhiji trekked the 241-mile distance in 24 days, addressing large congregations on the way. On April 6 he broke the salt law by picking up a lump of natural salt on the Dandi beach [illegible]. This simple act was immediately followed by [illegible] defiance of the law.

Motilal Nehru gave away his palatial residence at Allahabad to the nation during Gandhiji's march to Dandi. (Below) he presides over a meeting in Allahabad addressed by Gandhiji. The momentous session of the Congress at Karachi (bottom) in 1931 adopted a bold new resolution on the fundamental rights of the Indian people.



Gandhiji, in 1931, in a contemplative mood at the Satyagraha Ashram founded by

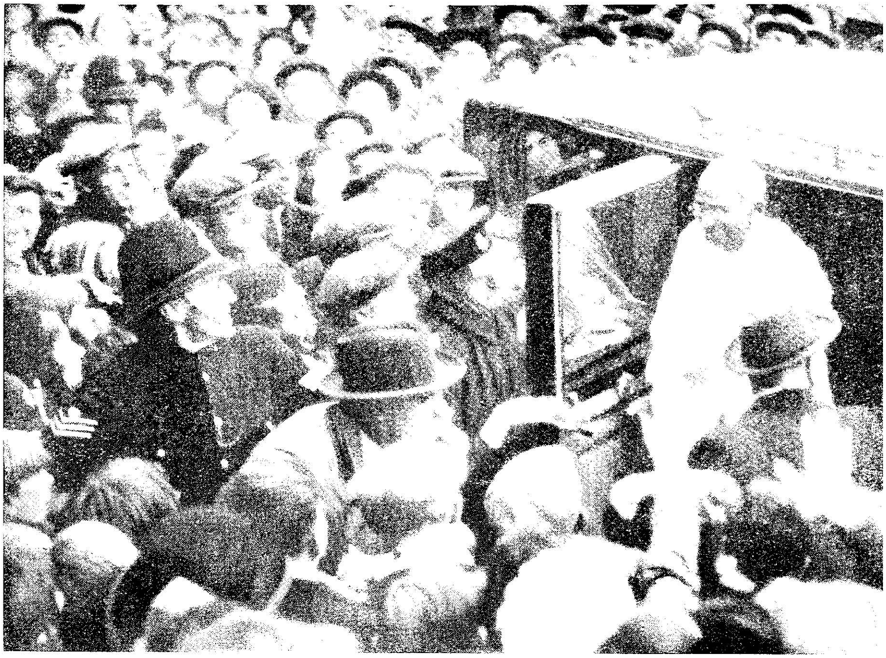
(Above) Gandhiji shortly before his departure for the Round Table Conference in London on August 29, 1931. (At left and below) on board the ship



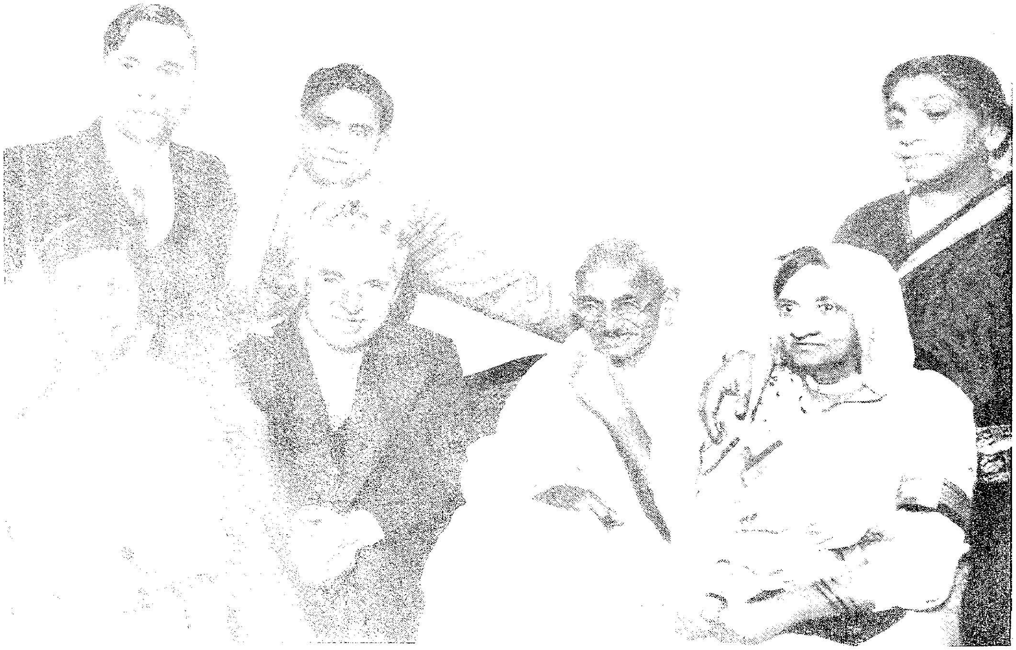
Gandhiji in London

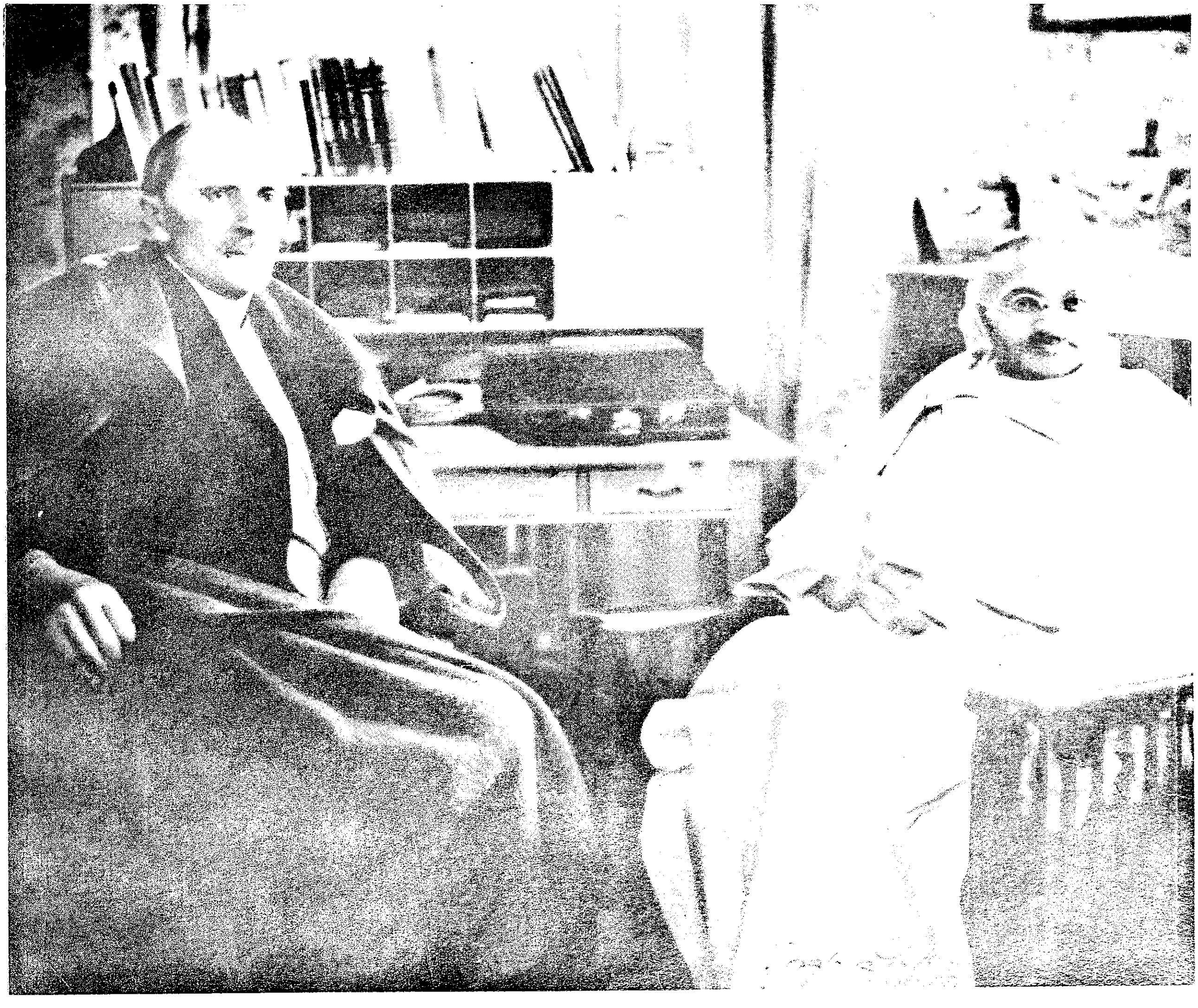
Addressing the Round Table Conference on September, 15, 1931, Gandhiji said [illegible] points of agreement. He said, "I would love to go away from the British isles with [illegible] honourable and equal partnership between Great Britain and India." The Conf[illegible] returned home "empty-handed."

Apart from the Round Table Conference, Gandhiji met many people and visited many places in England. Wherever he went he attracted crowds of cheering citizens (right). He spent two days at Lancashire (below and opposite page) visiting the textile workers.



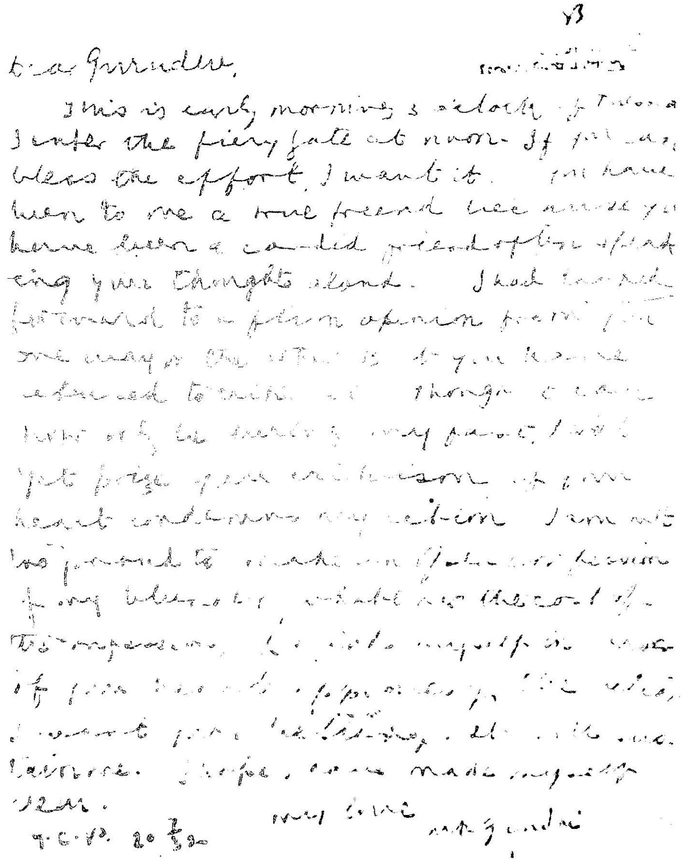
While in London Gandhiji found time to sit for Jo Davidson, an American sculptor, and to meet actor Charlie Chaplin.





On his way back to India Gandhiji stopped in France, Switzerland and Italy. In Switzerland he spent some time with Romain Rolland.

Before Gandhiji landed at Bombay on December 28, 1931, thousands of Congress workers, including Jawaharlal Nehru, were arrested. Gandhiji himself was arrested on January 4 and interned in the Yeravada Central Prison. He was so often housed there that once when he was asked for his address, he replied Yeravada Jail.



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Dear Gurudev, [illegible]

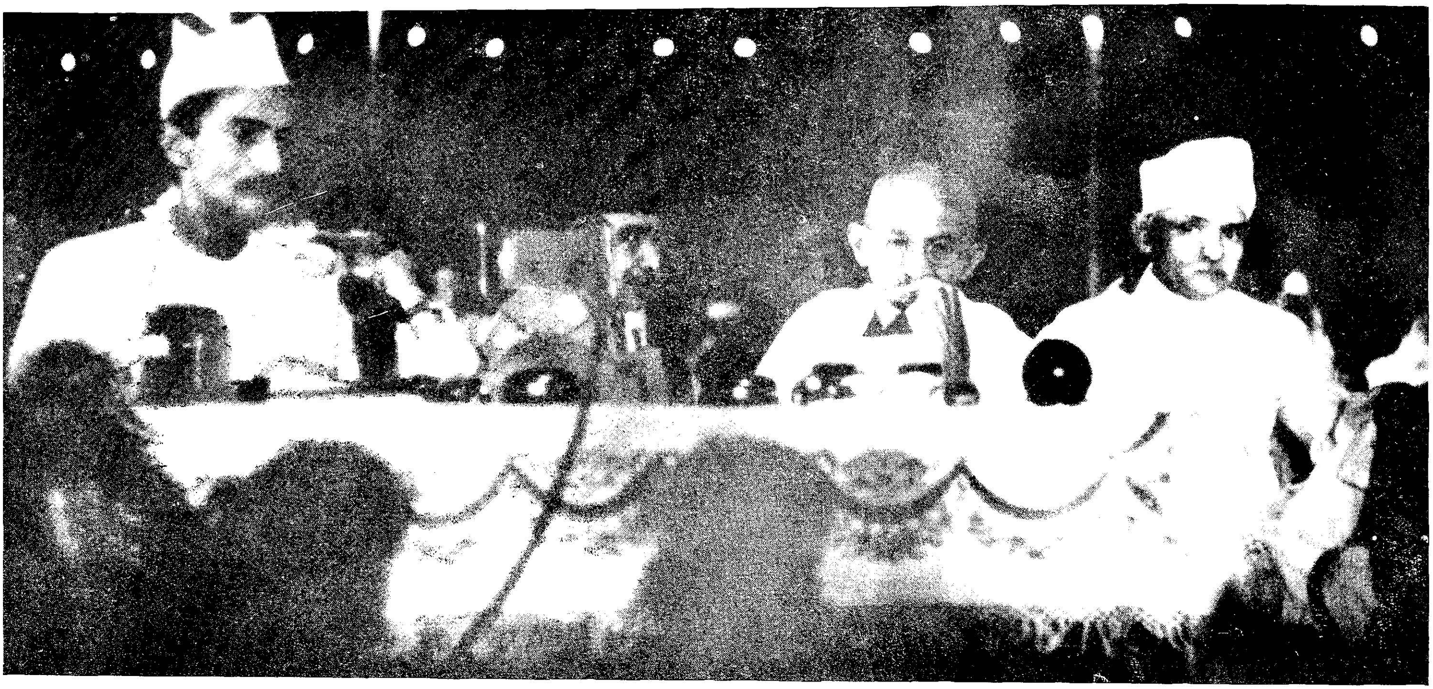
This is early morning 3 o'clock of Tuesday. I enter the fiery gate at noon. If you can bless the effort, I want it. You have been to me a true friend because you have been a candid friend often speaking your thoughts aloud. I had looked forward to a firm opinion from you one way or the other. But you have refused to criticise. Though it can now only be during my fast, I will yet prize your criticism, if your heart condemns my action. I am not too proud to make an open confession of my blunder, whatever the cost of the confession, if I find myself in error. If your heart approves of the action, I want your blessing. It will sustain me. I hope I have made myself clear.

My love
M. K. Gandhi

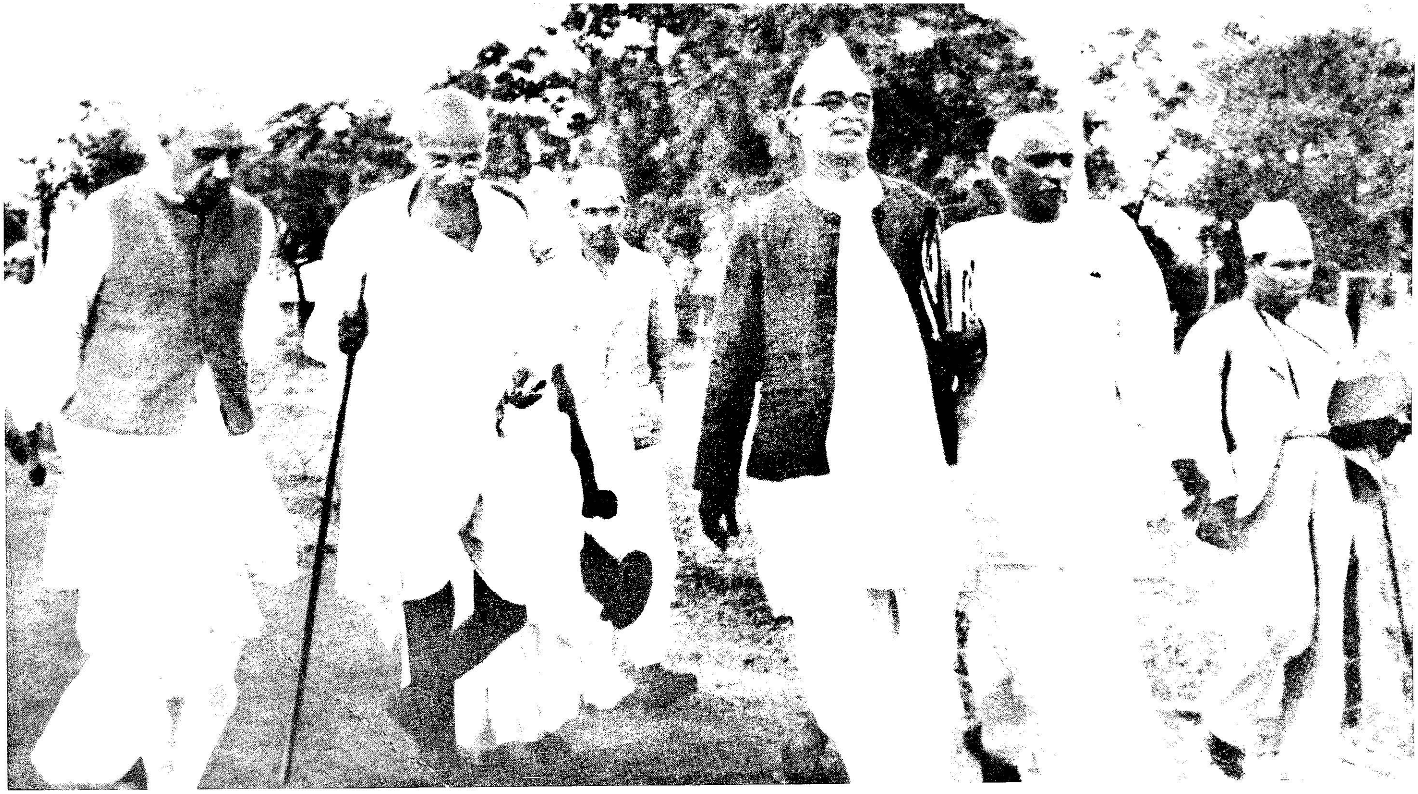
[illegible] 20-9-32

A letter Gandhiji wrote to poet Tagore from the Jail.

This picture belongs to a later period and shows Gandhiji on a visit to political prisoners [illegible]

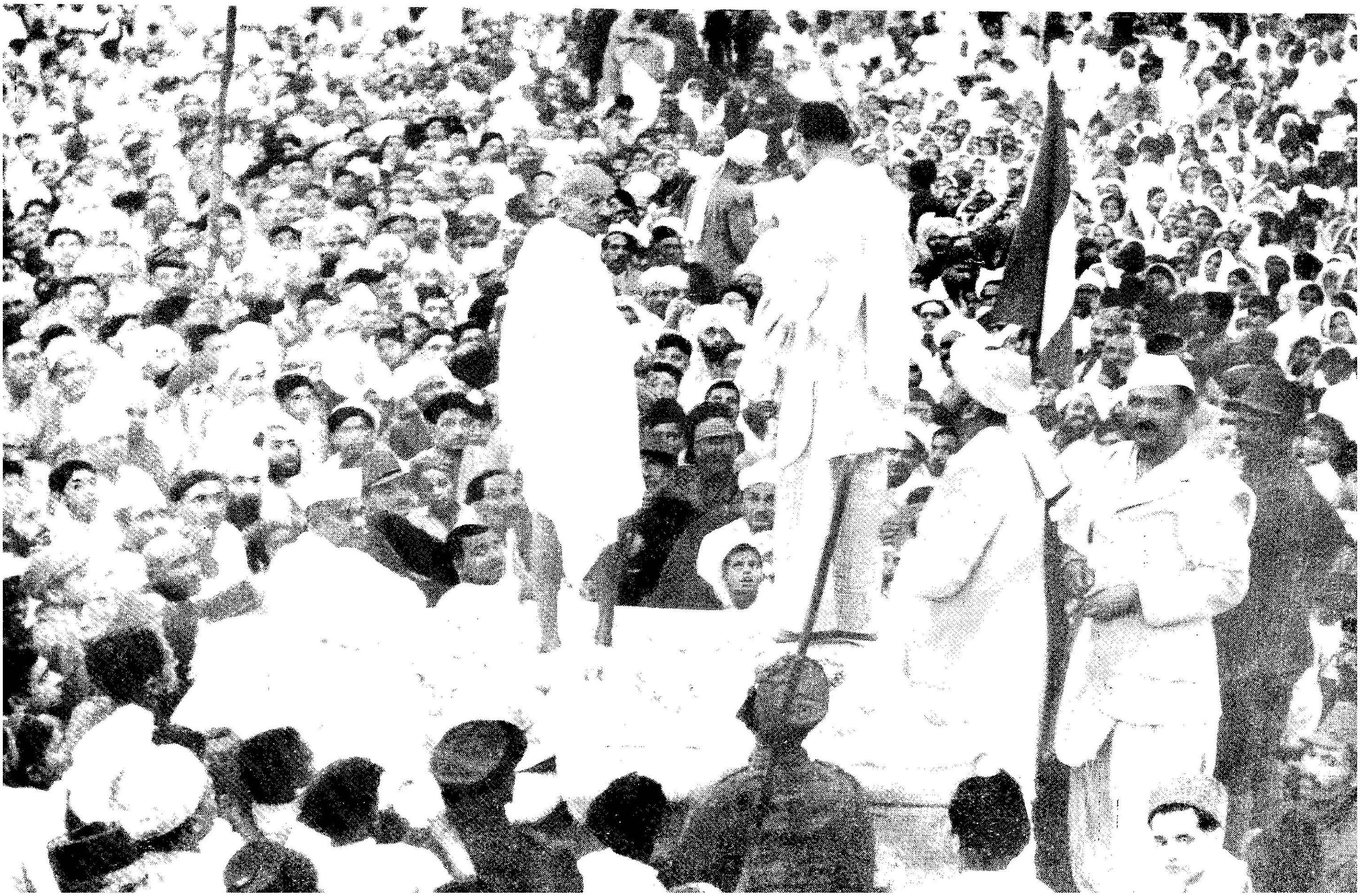


(Above) Gandhiji with Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya at the Bombay Congress session, 1934; and (left) with Subhas Chandra Bose at the Haripura Congress, 1938



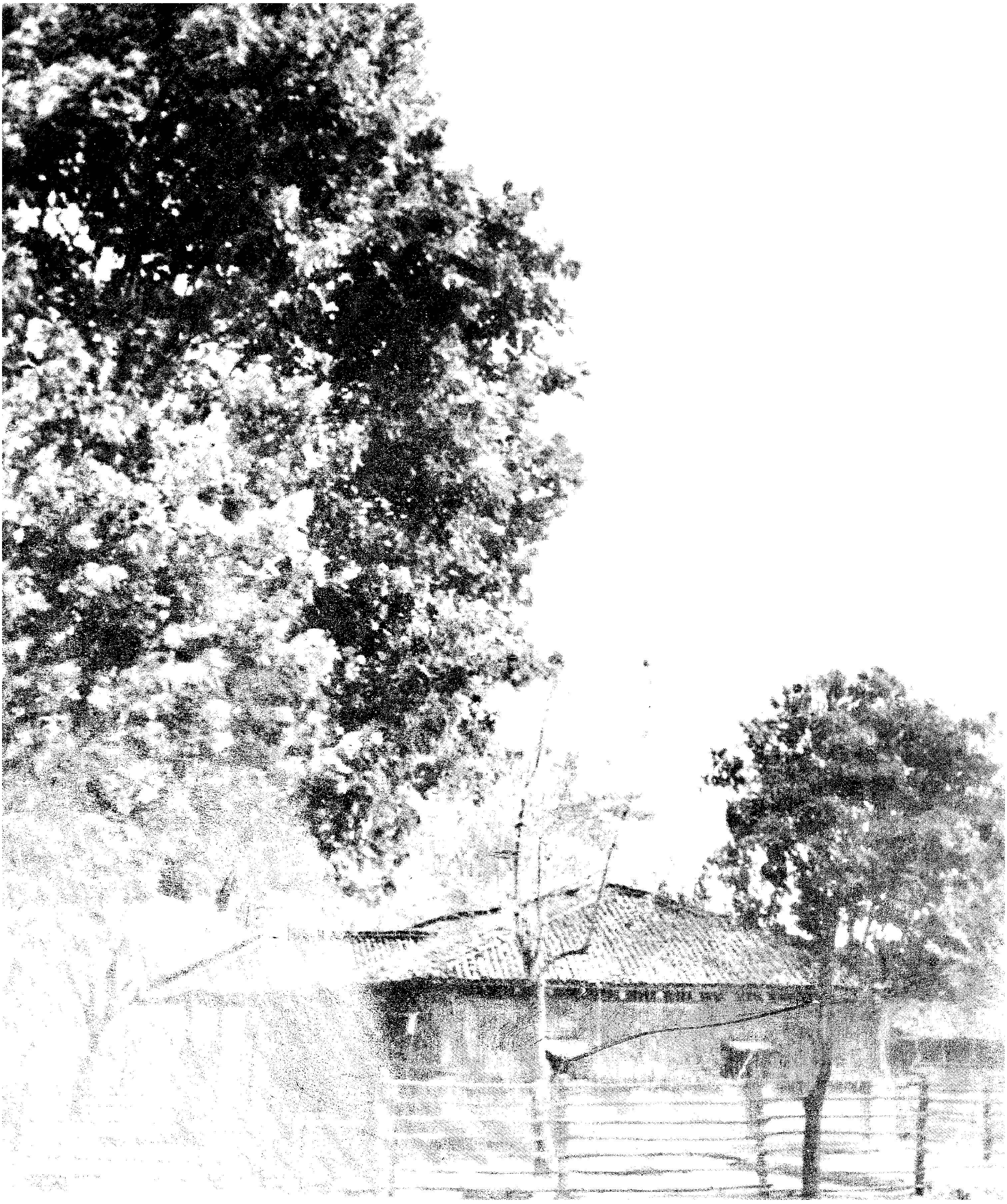
(Above) Gandhiji with Jawaharlal Nehru and others on their way to the Congress Working Committee meeting at Wardha, 1940. (Right) the last meal before he began his fast at Rajkot against the unpopular policies of the state's ruler in March 1939

On his way to the North-West Frontier Province, May 1938. (Bottom) addressing a public meeting in Peshawar



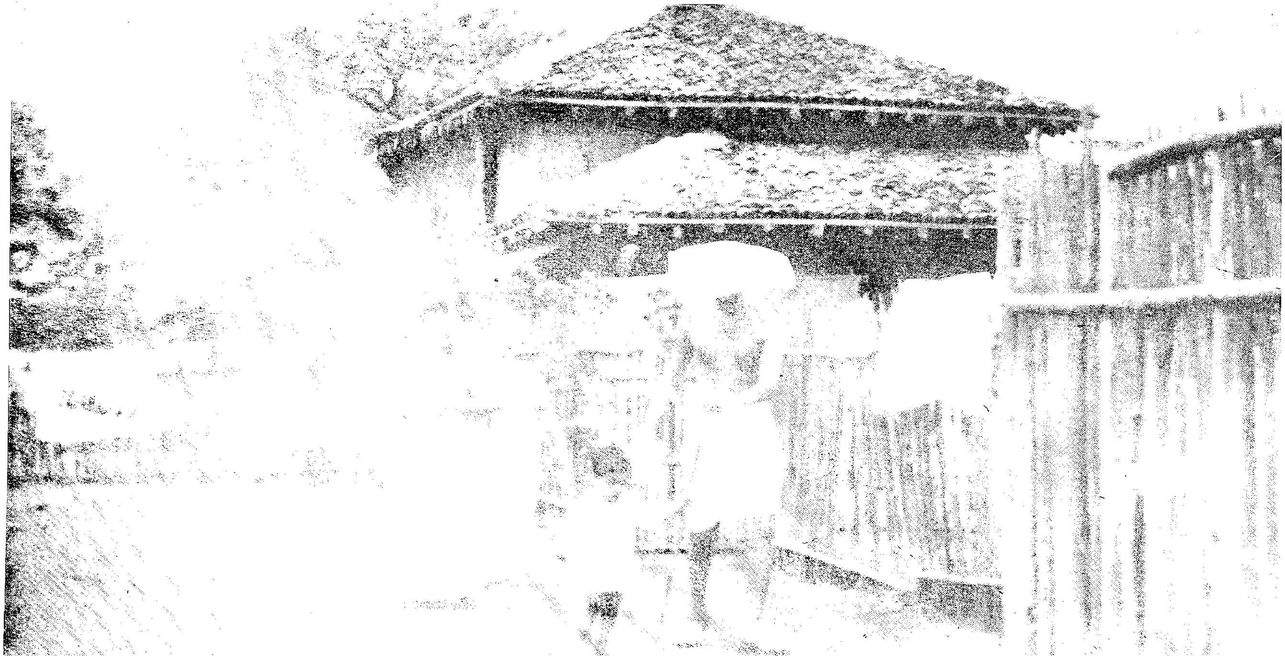
Gandhiji with Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. The Pathan leader was a staunch follower of Gandhiji. His bravery and frankness and his faith in non-violence earned him the title 'Frontier Gandhi'.

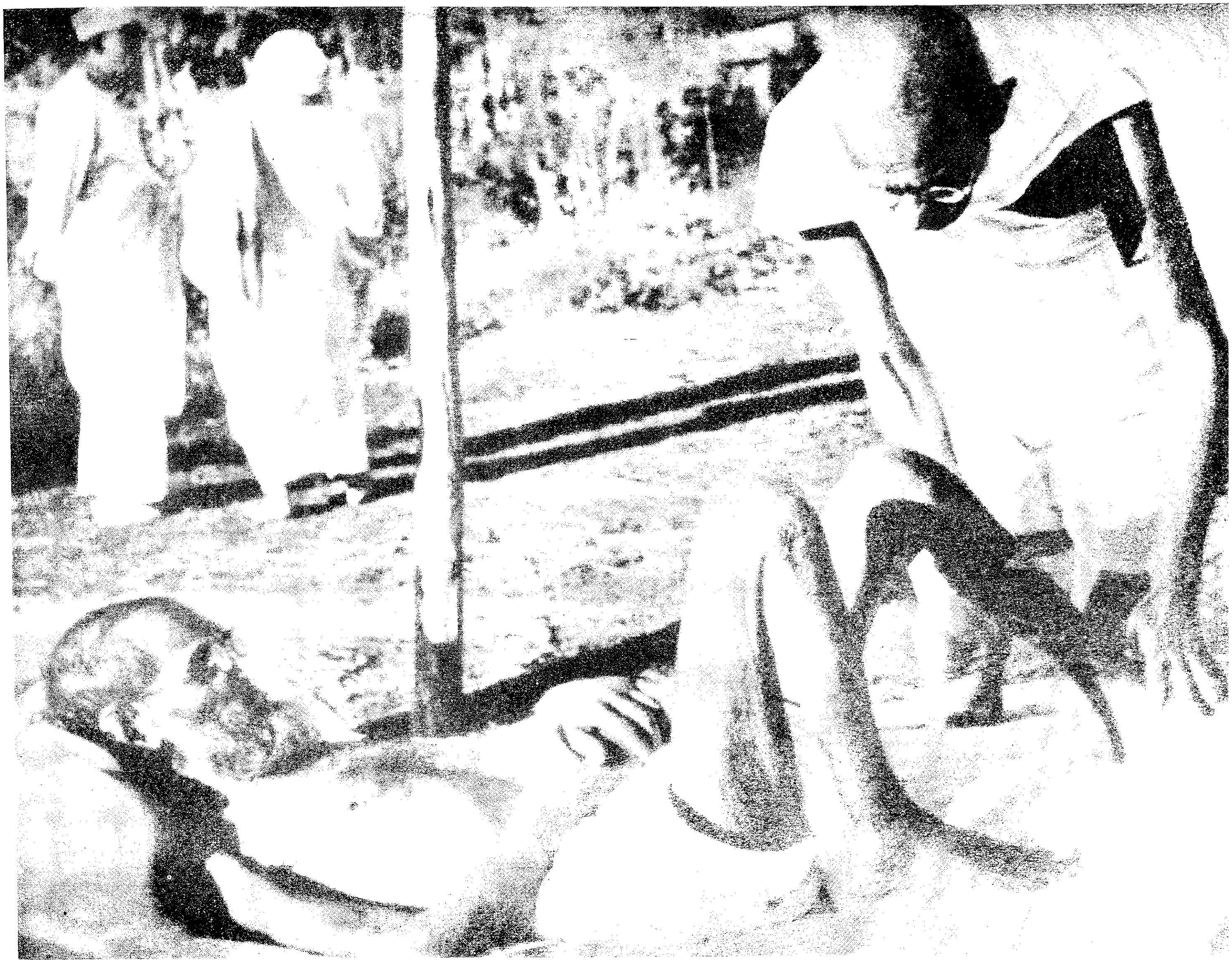
AN APOSTLE OF LOVE



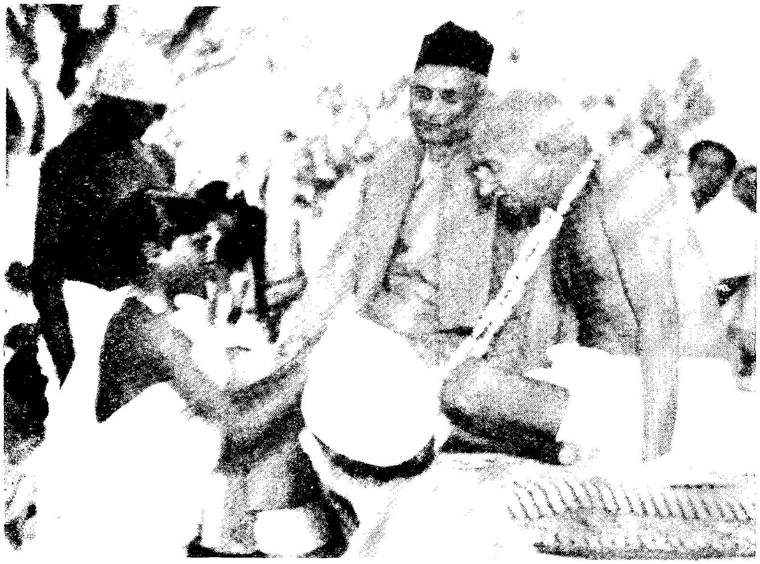
In July 1933, Gandhiji disbanded his Satyagraha Ashram at Sabarmati and in 1936 moved it to Sevagram near Wardha in Central India. Gandhiji's hut at Sevagram (opposite page) became the headquarters of the Gandhian programme of village reconstruction. Among Gandhiji's close associates in this programme were Thakkar Bapa (right above) and Acharya Vinoba Bhave (below). "India lives in her villages", Gandhiji used to say, "when I succeed in ridding the villages of their poverty, I have won Swaraj."

At Sevagram, as elsewhere, Gandhiji followed a routine of disciplined activity. His day began before 5 a.m. From 6 a.m. he was busy with his correspondence and writing for *Harijan*. He took his morning sip at 5 a.m. and his last morsel of food before sunset. He span regularly during the day. The long walks in the mornings and evenings were often devoted to talks with friends and visitors.





When it came to looking after the sick, no nurse could be more tender or more diligent than Gandhiji. Here he attends to Parchure Shastri, a leprosy patient at Sevagram, where he received Gandhiji's constant care and attention.



The cause of the "untouchables," whom he preferred to call Harijans (children of God), was very dear to Gandhiji. Here and on page opposite, we see him talking to a Harijan girl at Santiniketan; opening a well for Harijans in a village near Nagpur; and collecting donations for Harijan welfare during a train journey.

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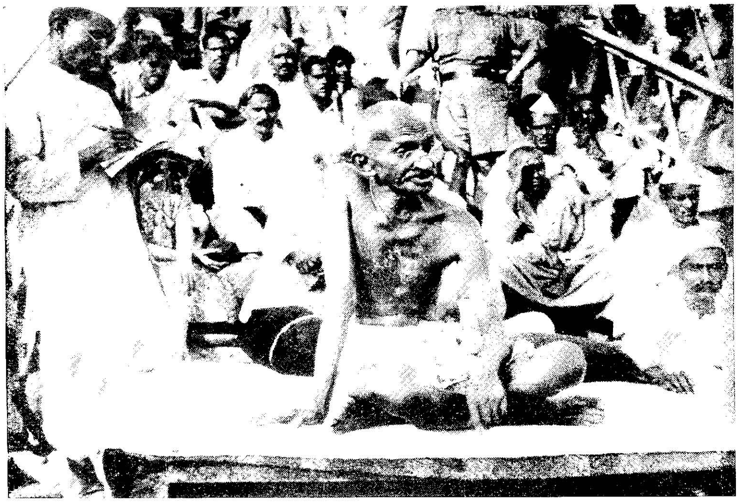
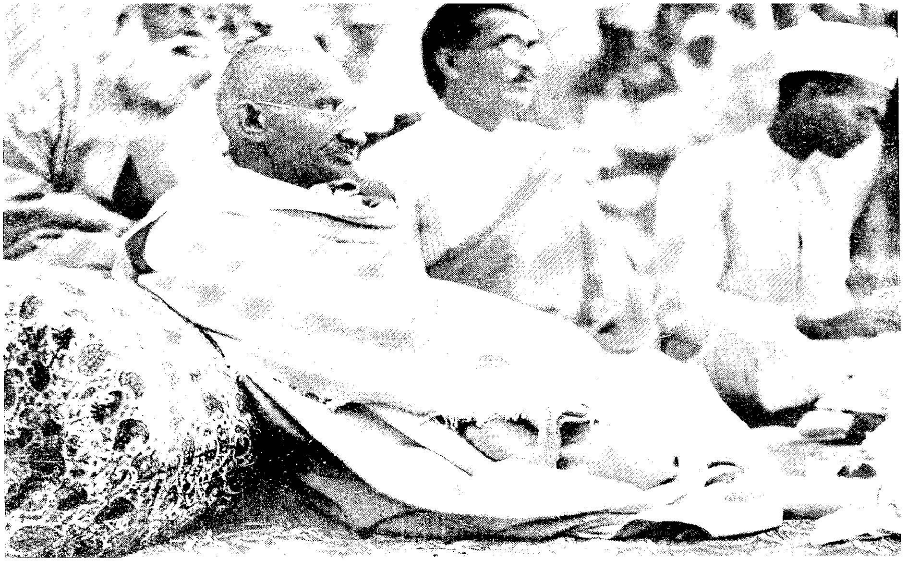
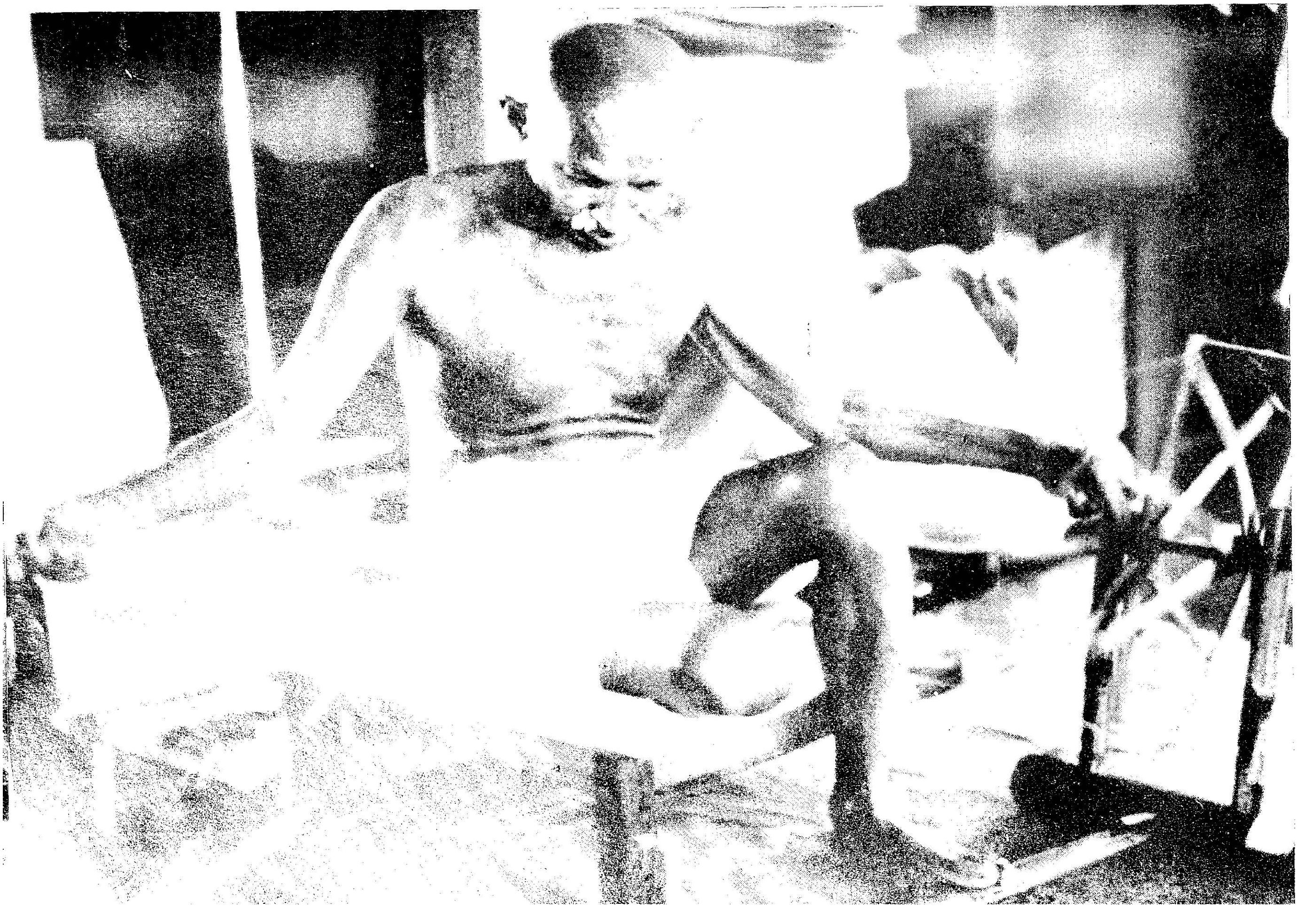


Service of those in distress was a life-long mission with Gandhiji. After the terrible Bihar earthquake of 1934, he undertook a walking tour of the affected villages with Dr. Rajendra Prasad (left). Next year, accompanied by Sardar Patel, he went on a tour of Gujarat villages (below) ravaged by a plague epidemic. He founded a number of institutions for the service of the poor. (Opposite page) he lays the foundation stone of the Kasturba Sevashram at Maroli on June 12, 1931.



Another cause dear to Gandhiji was that of education. He evolved and advocated a system of basic education. Gujarat Vidyapeeth, a major institution of higher education, was his creation. (Opposite page top) he presides over a convocation at the Gujarat Vidyapeeth. (Bottom) he is on his way to take a Bible class there. (Above) Gandhiji at a reception given to him and Kasturba by Tagore at *Santiniketan*. (Right) being received by Dr. Radhakrishnan at the Banaras Hindu University

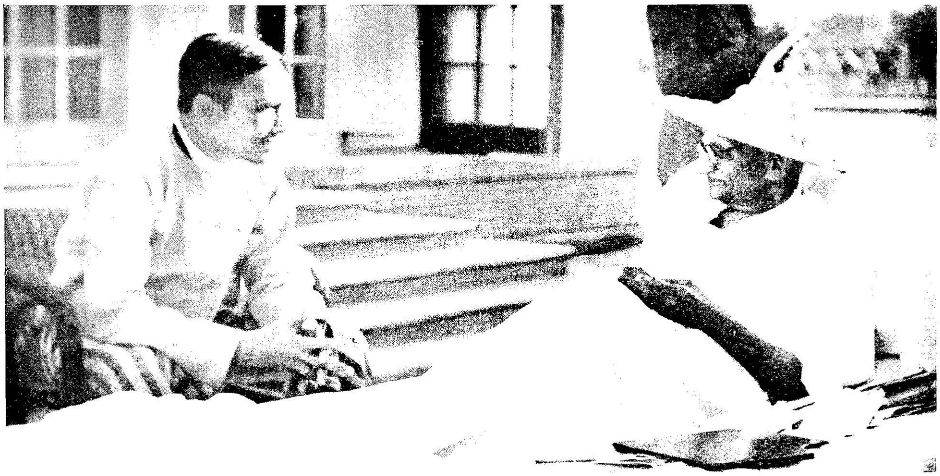
Gandhiji at the spinning wheel. The spinning wheel became a symbol of economic emancipation for the impoverished millions.



Gandhiji took keen interest in the rural uplift work of organizations like All India Village Industries Association. (Above) Gandhiji at the exhibition stalls set up by the AIVIA at the Haripura Congress (right) and the Ramgarh Congress (left). (Below right) he receives a gift of hand-spun cloth from an Adivasi at Ramgarh.

The simplicity, kindliness and charm of Gandhiji's nature, the depth and range of his sympathies, and the keenness of his humour and laughter cast a spell on all who came near him. He was particularly relaxed in the company of children, and always had a word of cheer for the old and the infirm.

The range of Gandhiji's sympathies was truly vast. Here we see him addressing the Asian Relations Conference, and (below) with the artist Nandalal Bose at Santiniketan.

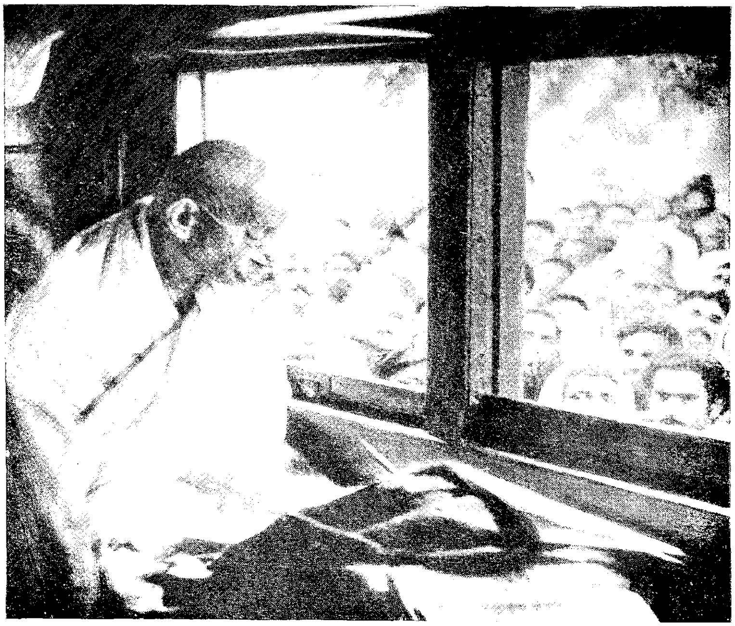


At Sevagram, at Birla House or at the Bhangi Colony in New Delhi, wherever he was staying, Gandhiji received a stream of visitors. They came from all parts of the country and from all over the world to meet the Mahatma. On this page (from top to bottom) we see him with Lady Mountbatten, U Nu of Burma, and Miss C. Smith, a Negro social worker from the U.S.A.

HARIJAN

THE CLEANSER

Himself an active journalist—the *Harijan* (right) was one of the many journals he founded and edited—Gandhiji was popular with pressmen of all nationalities. (Above) we see him with a group of Indian and foreign correspondents. (Opposite page) Gandhiji, the writer and journalist, at work



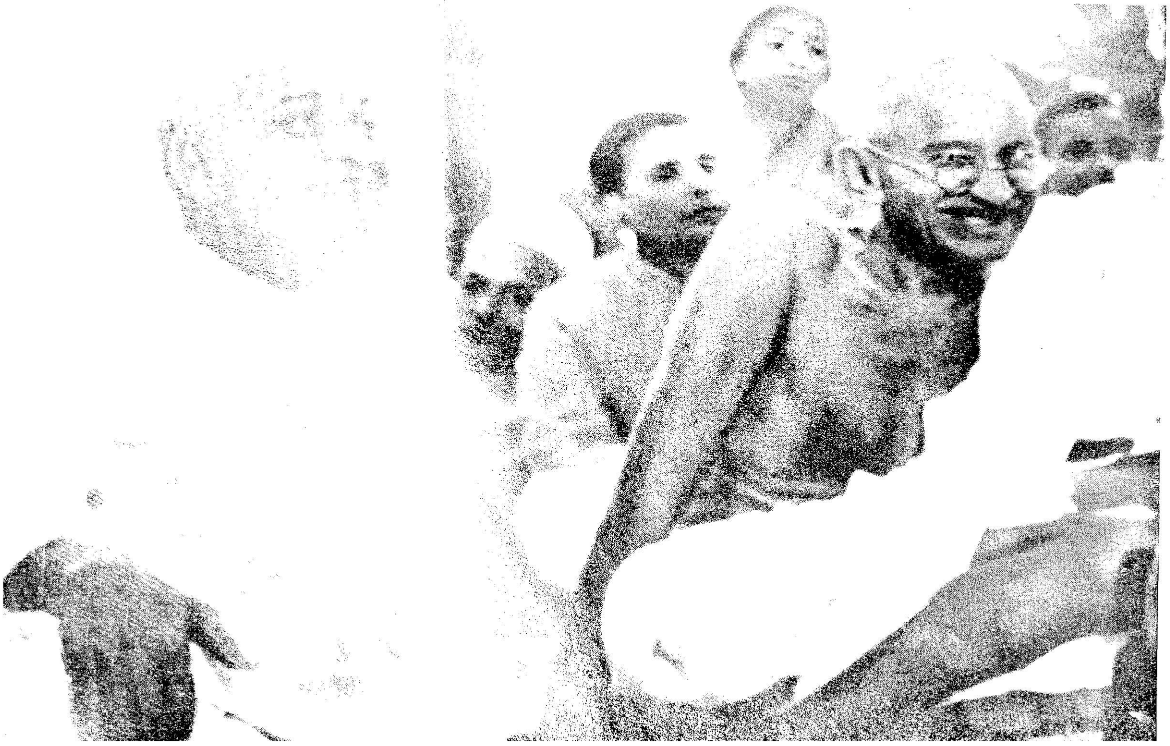
Gandhiji was constantly on the move, and knew every part of the country well. Like millions of his countrymen, he travelled class III on the railways. At wayside stations, eager crowds of people would wait for a glimpse of him. Often he would come out and talk to them.

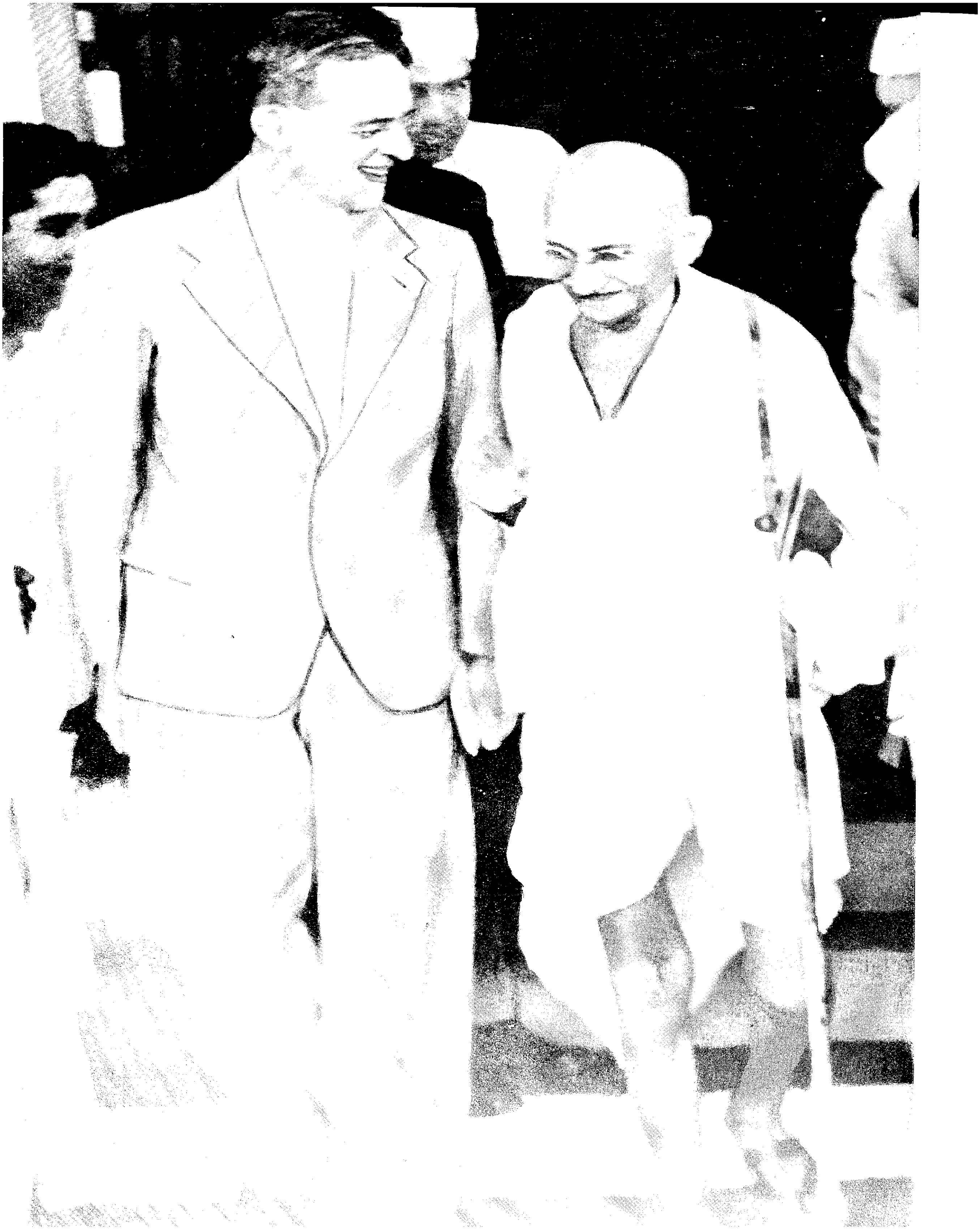
Some interesting studies of Gandhiji : using a telephone ; trying out a new type of spinning device; looking into a microscope ; and riding a bicycle.

THE LAST PHASE

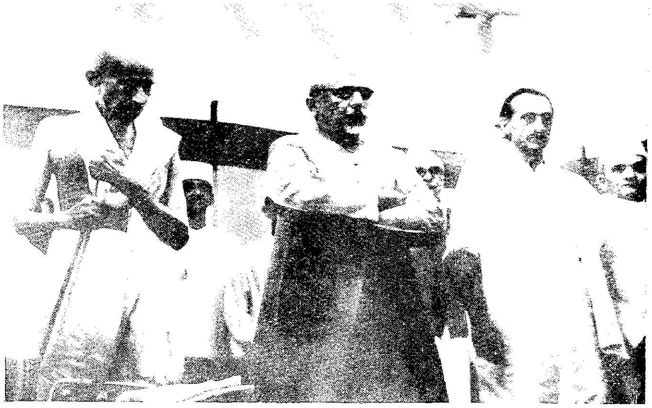
The Second World War broke out in September 1939. In September 1940, Gandhiji was invited to Simla by the Viceroy to discuss vital questions relating to India's participation in the war. On his way to the Viceregal Lodge in Simla, he had to use a man-drawn rickshaw, though he regarded it as an inhuman practice.

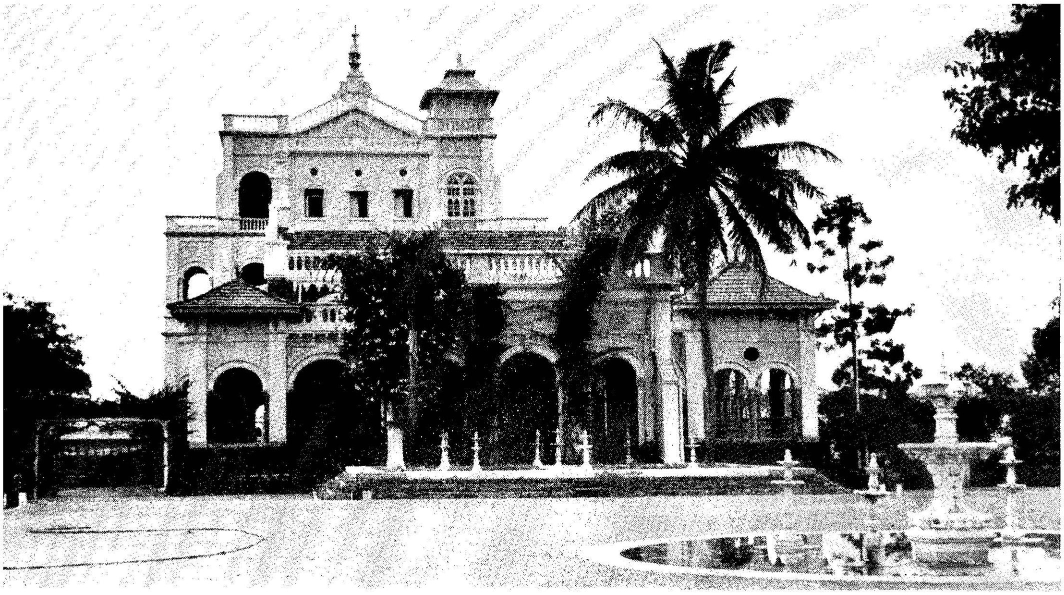
In February 1942, the Congress Working Committee met at Wardha (above) to discuss the war crisis in relation to India's demand for freedom. Gandhiji was assisted, in the crucial negotiations that followed, by trusted lieutenants like Patel, Nehru, Rajendra Prasad and Azad.





In March 1942, the British Government sent Sir Stafford Cripps to seek the cooperation of the Congress offering minor political concessions. Gandhiji met Cripps (opposite page) in Delhi; described the proposals brought by him as a "post-dated cheque". The proposals were rejected by all parties. The All India Congress Committee met at Bombay on August 8, 1942, and under the guidance of Gandhiji passed the historic "Quit India" resolution. The following day, Gandhiji, the Congress Working Committee members and hundreds of other political workers were arrested. The Congress was declared illegal, and "leonine violence" was employed to smother the spirit of revolt.



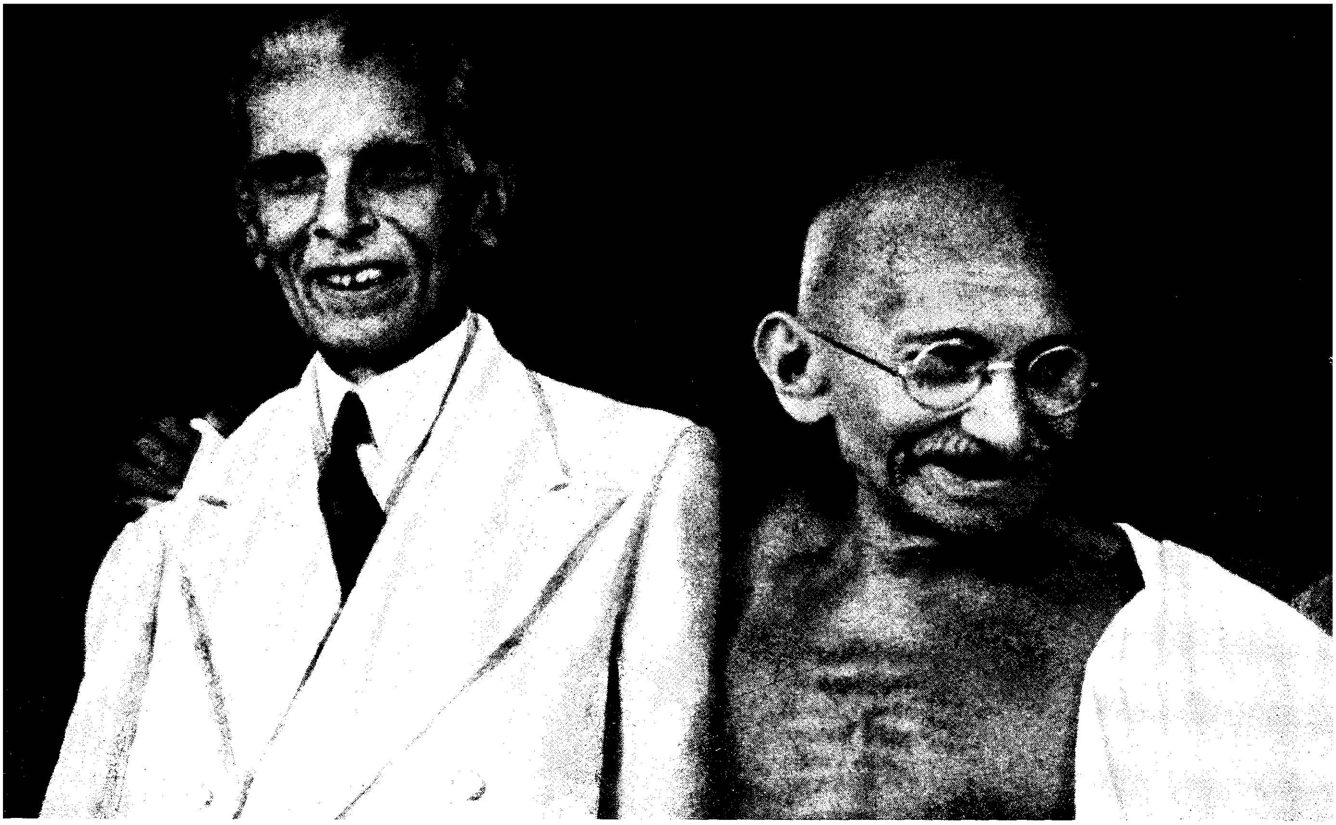


(Above) The Aga Khan Palace near Poona where Gandhiji was interned from August 1942 to May 1944

(Below left) Last moments of Kasturba at the Aga Khan Palace, February 22, 1944

(Right) Gandhiji with the mortal remains of Kasturba

Bereaved of Kasturba and Mahadev Desai, his secretary, and weakened by malaria, Gandhiji was released from prison on May 6, 1944.



The demand for a separate state for Muslims of India raised by M. A. Jinnah and Muslim League disturbed Gandhiji, a life-long votary of Hindu-Muslim unity. Gandhi-Jinnah talks, held in Bombay in September 1944, found the Muslim League leader unresponsive to Gandhiji's plea for unity.

In April 1946, came the Cabinet Mission, led by Lord Pethick-Lawrence (seen at left with Gandhiji). The Mission failed to secure an agreed solution; announced its own plan for India's future constitutional set-up.

Gandhiji attended the All India Congress Committee meeting in Bombay, held in July 1946. Soon after, the Congress agreed to participate in the formation of an Interim Government.

The "Direct Action" Day call given on August 16, 1946, by the Muslim League resulted in unprecedented communal riots in many parts of the country, especially in Bengal. Calcutta and Noakhali were the worst affected. Profoundly disturbed by this fraternal strife, Gandhiji decided to visit Noakhali *via* Calcutta. Reaching Noakhali in November 1946, he walked barefoot from village to village, spending the nights in mud huts, "wiping the tears from every eye" and bringing courage to the afflicted.

While still on his walking tour in Noakhali, Gandhiji had received a call from Bihar on the outbreak of communal violence there. He reached Patna on March 5, 1947. Abdul Ghaffar Khan was with him during his Bihar tour.

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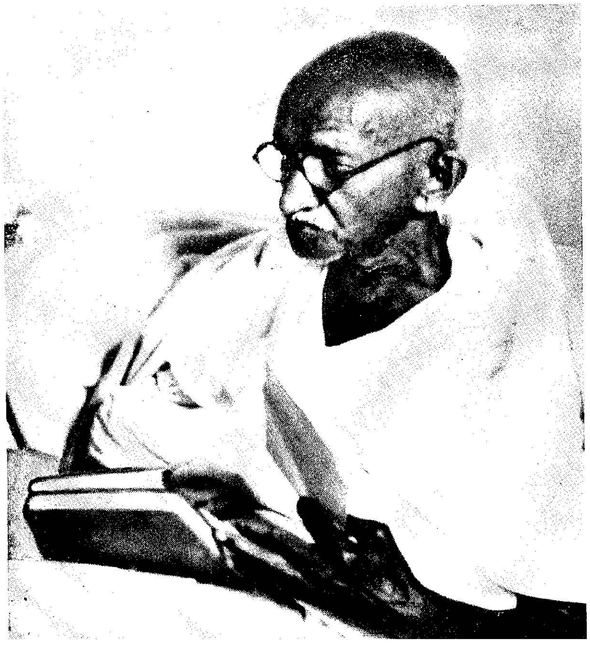
Gandhiji helping Bibi Amtus Salaam, a disciple, to end her twenty-five day fast undertaken in protest against communal riots in East Bengal and Bihar



Gandhiji on the last day of his fast undertaken in January 1948 to bring about communal amity in Delhi

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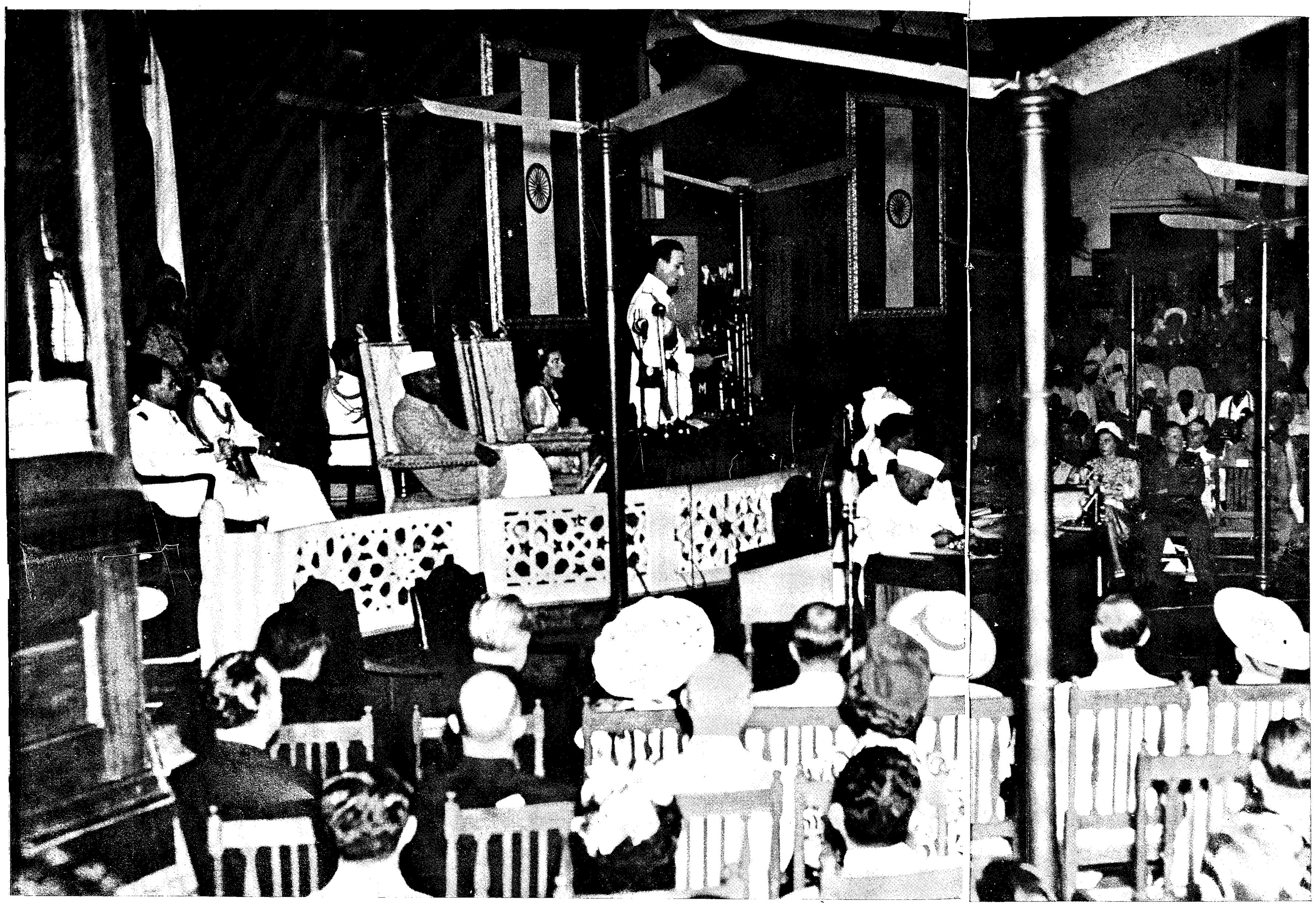
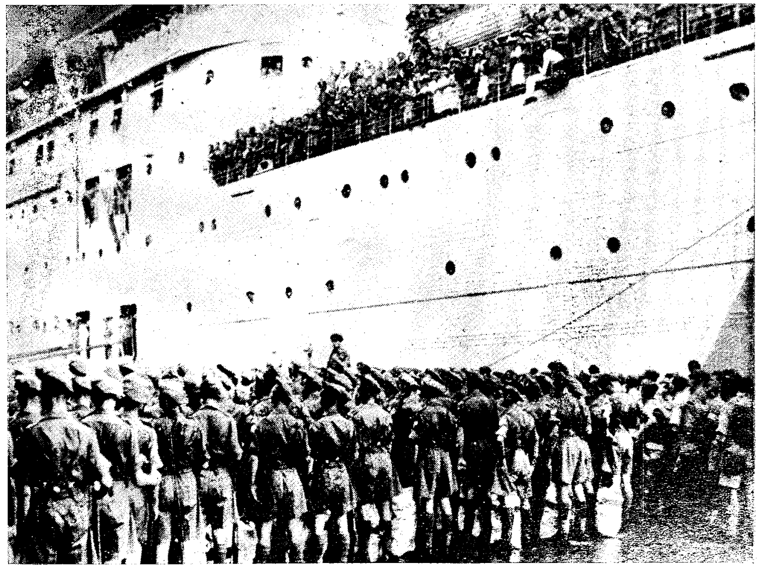
In June 1947, the All India Congress Committee met in Delhi to ratify the Working Committee's resolution accepting the transfer of power on the basis of Partition. Gandhiji was present.

(Right) Gandhiji with Lord and Lady Mountbatten. The last British Viceroy in India stayed on to become the first Governor-General of independent India.



August 14-15, 1947. Midnight session of the Constituent Assembly of India in New Delhi. Governor-General says in his address: "At this historic moment let us not forget all that India owes to Mahatma Gandhi—the architect of her freedom through non-violence. We miss his presence here today, and would have him know how much he is in our thoughts. . . ."



British troops leaving India

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While Delhi celebrated the advent of independence, Gandhiji was in distant Bengal working for peace and brotherhood among men.

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Walking to a prayer meeting in Delhi on January 29, 1948—one of the last photographs of Gandhiji. On January 30, while on his way to the evening prayer, hit by three bullets fired by a fanatic, he uttered *He Ram* and fell.

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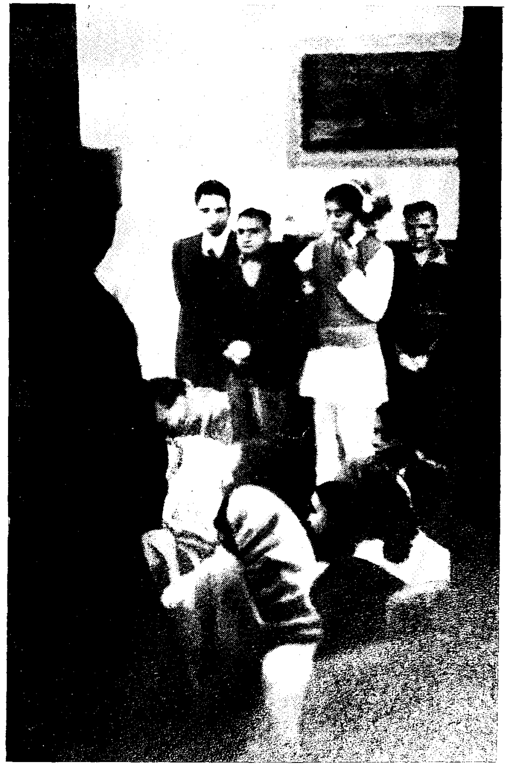
The last moments, in the hushed silence of a room at Birla House



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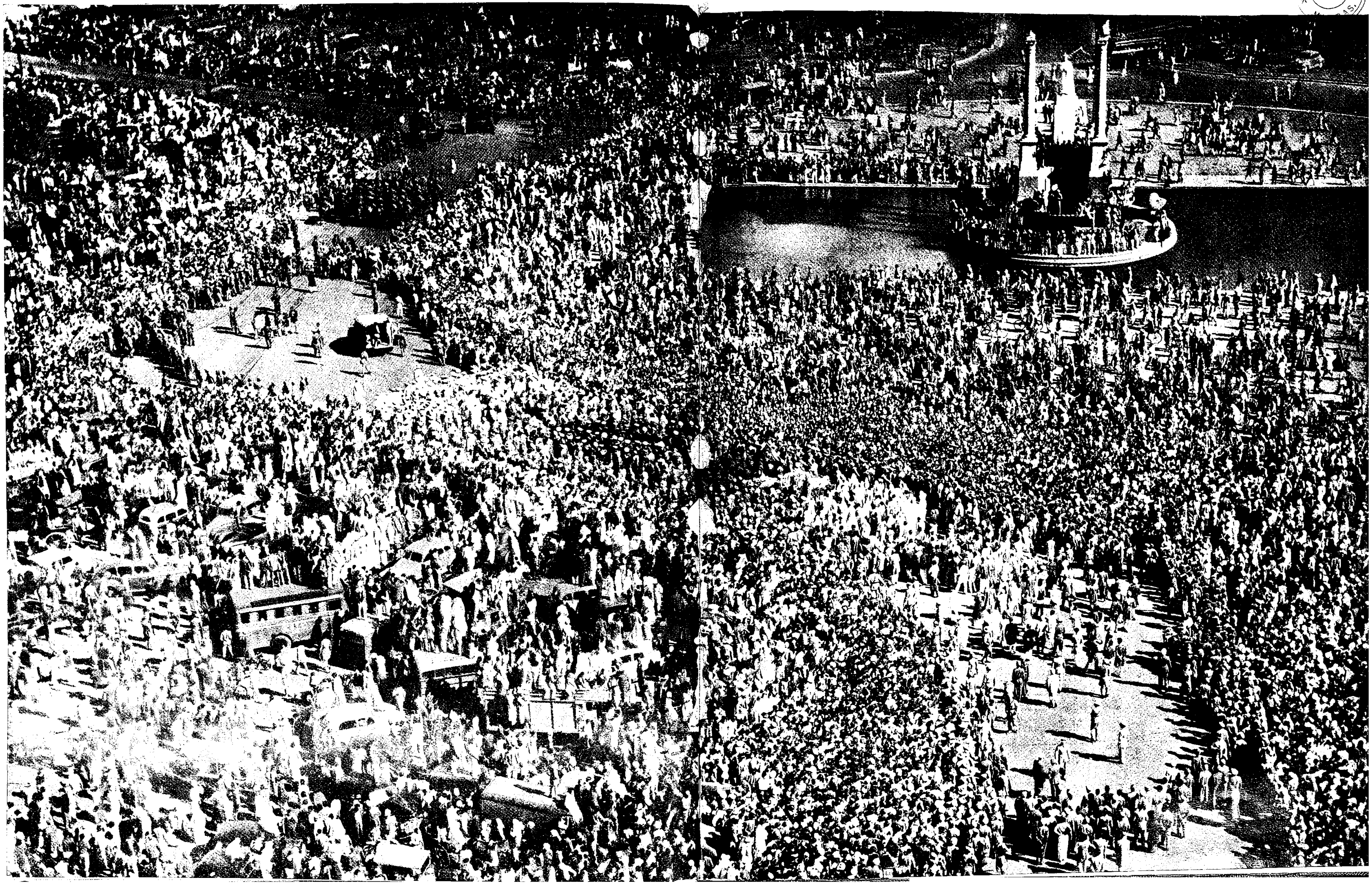

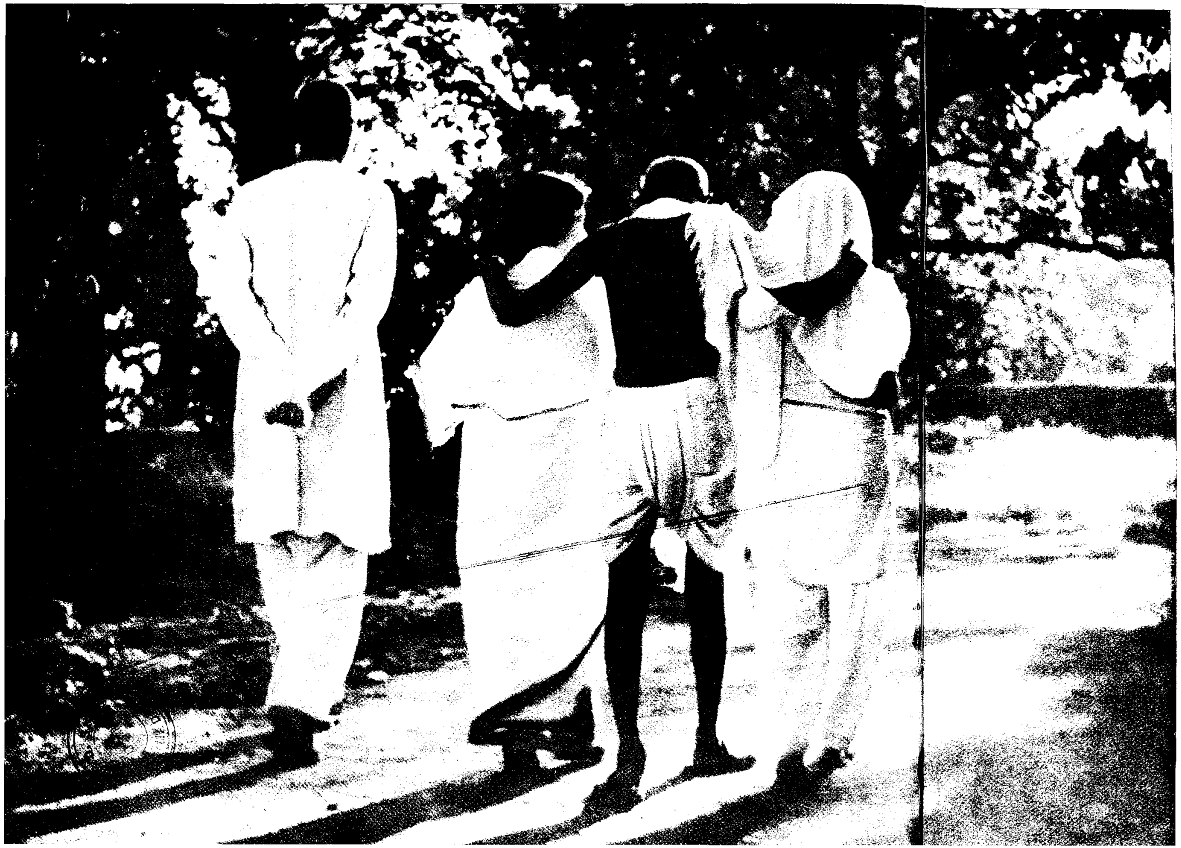

. . . He has gone, and all over India there is a feeling of having been left desolate and forlorn. All of us sense that feeling, and I do not know when we shall be able to get rid of it, and yet together with that feeling there is also a feeling of proud thanksgiving that it has been given to us of this generation to be associated with this mighty person. In ages to come, centuries and may be millenniums after us, people will think of this generation when this man of God trod the earth and will think of us who, however small, could also follow his path and probably tread on that holy ground where his feet had been . . .

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

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